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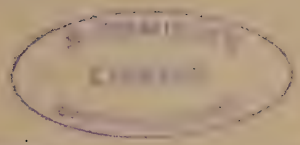
CANON SHEEHAN OF DONERAILE

THE STORY OF AN IRISH PARISH PRIEST
AS TOLD CHIEFLY BY HIMSELF IN BOOKS
PERSONAL MEMOIRS AND LETTERS

BY

HERMAN J. HEUSER, D.D.
OVERBROOK SEMINARY



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FOREWORD

THE story of Patrick Augustine Sheehan is that of a modest country pastor in the south of Ireland who made a great name as a writer of fiction, poetry, and thoughtful essay.

Between 1895 and 1910 he had published fifteen volumes. They are: *Geoffrey Austin*, *The Triumph of Failure*, *My New Curate*, *Luke Delmege*, *The Blindness of Dr. Gray*, *Glenanaar*, *Lisheen*, *Miriam Lucas*, *The Queen's Fillet*, *Under the Cedars and the Stars*, *Parerga*, *The Intellectuals*, *Cithara Mea* (a volume of poems), and *Mariae Corona* (sermons in honor of Our Lady). Besides these, he wrote a number of Essays and Criticisms. Another novel, dealing with the Irish uprising in 1867, and bearing the title *The Graves at Kilmorna*, was published after his death. Some of his books gained at once an international reputation, and were translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Hungarian, Slavonic, and Russian (Ruthenian).

These writings not only reveal his special gifts as a thinker and writer, but they allow us to form a fair estimate of his character as a man; of his aims and ideals as a priest and pastor of souls; and they record many actual experiences which gave direction and emphasis to these aims.

Canon Sheehan wrote his novels as a travelled man tells his adventures to young folk. His poetic gift made him clothe the incidents in the vesture of romance, with a moral vista behind the action of his story, to draw the attention of the reader to higher things. Although his figures were mostly copied from the life around him, a certain sense of fitness and a natural delicacy caused him so to modify the form of his character-play as to make it impossible for the general public to point the finger to

any individual and say: This is the man. But those who knew the Canon and the relations that shaped his visions or influenced his motives in writing, could in many cases trace the sources of his immediate inspirations to definite places and persons.

Now that he is dead, and it is possible to compare the varied expressions of his genius, as well as to note the occasions that gave rise to them, there come to the surface spontaneously numerous evidences to show that he habitually painted from life. An illustration of this may be found in his collection of short stories under the title of *The Story of a Spoiled Priest.* Almost all the incidents portrayed there are literally true. The author lays the scene of the school, in the first story, "in the County Waterford," but the description of the place is actually that of Mallow, his native town, as he depicted it elsewhere in almost identical terms. The father of "the spoiled priest" is Patrick Sheehan's early teacher at the National School; the young curate who discovers Dr. Everhard is Father Sheehan himself; and Kevin O'Donnell who enters a monastery in Florence is a priest whom the Canon befriended to his last hour. Similarly we recognize in the story of "Rita the Street Singer" a barely disguised incident that happened while the author was attached as curate to the cathedral at Queenstown, between 1881 and 1889, although he lays the scene at "Reineville" (an obvious translation of "Queenstown") and dates it about 1880. In like manner numerous details in the story of *Glenanaar* present occurrences and scenes taken from the immediate nieghborhood of Doneraile.

It is not necessary to assume that Canon Sheehan, when writing, was always conscious of the fact that he was projecting the likeness of this or that individual. He did not write as a professional man of letters, that is to say with artistic attention to definite methods and models. His compositions were wholly spontaneous, and done as a recreation from the fatiguing and, to him, most serious obligations of his pastoral ministry. On this fact oppor-

tunity will offer to enlarge, when speaking of his particular gift as a writer; here it suffices to say that his observant mind acted for him as does the sensitized plate of a camera. It mechanically took images and reproduced them. The records thus traced give us not only his itinerary through the broad ways of life but also specific indications of his inner soul action.

Beyond this fragmentary and unconscious revelation of his personality by himself the general public has hitherto known little of Canon Sheehan. His mode of life tended toward retirement, and apart from an absorbing devotion to his duties as parish priest, the outside world saw him rarely, and then only as the interpreter of some particular message, such as his office as a preacher or lecturer led him to take up for the time.

To the few who were intimate with him we owe the main data of his earlier life. These are chiefly — his younger brother, Mr. Denis B. Sheehan, of Queenstown, who kindly read and corrected the MS. of this biography and, as literary executor of the Canon, was able to supplement it with valuable notes and letters. Next I am indebted for information to Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., the friend of Father Sheehan's boyhood, and his associate at school. Likewise to that most lovable of literary Irish priests, the late Father Matthew Russell, S.J., founder in 1873, and editor for more than thirty-five years, of the *Irish Monthly*, to which magazine Father Sheehan was an occasional contributor. When in later years the author of *My New Curate* of necessity drew attention upon himself, Father Russell was induced to tell what he knew of him, in a brief article for *The Dolphin* (1902). Modest as was the account, he had managed to speak of the author in a way which delighted the curious reader, and gave a fair estimate of Father Sheehan's personality and character as "the most literary of Irish priests since the author of *The Prout Papers*."

A second biographical sketch came from the pen of the Rev. Michael Phelan, S.J., of the Limerick community,

who also enjoyed the personal friendship of the author. He wrote his impressions while Canon Sheehan was in his last illness and unable to revise them. This fact no doubt accounts for some inaccuracies which I shall have occasion to correct in the course of the biography. A third account of Father Sheehan appeared simultaneously in the *Irish Monthly* and the *Catholic World*, and was reprinted by the *Catholic Mind*. The latter attributes the sketch to the Rev. John J. Horgan, S.J. The fact is, the author is an Irish solicitor, whose uncle, as curate of Mallow parish, had young Patrick Sheehan in his church choir. Mr. Horgan himself began his literary career under the influence of Canon Sheehan, and is the author of *Great Catholic Laymen* and a number of monographs. His close acquaintance with the pastor of Doneraile enabled him to give a true appreciation of the latter; but he does not touch upon the Canon's domestic or pastoral relations.

Beyond such friendly reminiscences, and detached details of the Canon's career in the Irish and English press on the occasion of his death, there has been no attempt at a complete biography.

Apart from these gleanings which put me in the way of further sources of information, I owe much thoughtful aid in obtaining the requisite material for this sketch to Mother Mary Ita O'Connell of the Presentation Convent at Doneraile, whose generous devotion to the interests of education and religion during the years of Canon Sheehan's pastorate gave her exceptional opportunities of forming an accurate and sympathetic judgment of his life among the people of Doneraile. I have likewise to acknowledge the services of Dr. Grattan Flood, who permitted the use of some unpublished MSS. and letters, and other information which made it possible to obtain accurate accounts of the transactions relating to the "Land Settlement" in the district of Doneraile, in which the Canon had taken a leading part as representative of his flock. The Bishop of Cloyne, through his secretary the Rev. William F. Browne, kindly furnished me copies of

my correspondence with the author of *My New Curate* covering the period between 1897 and 1910, and other pertinent information. To Lord and Lady Castletown of Doneraile, whose respect and friendship the Canon enjoyed to the close of his life; Colonel Grove White, member of the Cork Historical Society; the Rev. John Burton, P.P., of Donoughmore; Brother P. A. Mulhall, director of the Doneraile Boys' School; Lady Gilbert (Rosa Mulholland), Miss Agnes Clune Quinlan of Limerick, resident in America; Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, of the Supreme Court of the United States, and others who, being personally acquainted with the Canon, kindly replied to my inquiries directly or indirectly, I also return thanks. Lastly I wish to express my indebtedness to Mr. Edward Galbally, associate editor and manager of the *Ecclesiastical Review*, for his aid in completing this biography by undertaking a journey, amid the trying conditions of the European war, in order to verify certain details of locality and other data connected with the late Canon's life.

Overbrook, *March*, 1917.

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CANON SHEEHAN OF DONERAILE

INTRODUCTORY

INTRODUCTORY

IN midsummer of 1897, while on a journey to Europe, I incidentally became interested in *Geoffrey Austin*, a volume which had been published anonymously two years before, and a belated copy of which had reached me for review before leaving America. It purported to be the story of a young student who gives his reminiscent impressions of teachers and their methods in one of the private tutoring colleges preparing boys for the Civil Service Examinations in Ireland. The purpose of the book was frankly critical; but so skillfully interwoven was the theme with the reflections of a cultured mind, while the scenic setting and diction had all the charm of romance, that one could not escape its attraction as a novel.

A feature of the story was the realism with which the author sketched his characters, as it were from life. Among these were three priests— Father Thomas Costello, Geoffrey Austin's guardian; Father Bellamy, the rector of Mayfield school; and Father Aidan, a parish priest from the county Clare. These figures were typical in a measure of the Irish clergy. As editor of an ecclesiastical periodical which was gradually gaining in popularity among the English-speaking clergy, I had for some years past been in search of a writer capable of drawing a series of clerical sketches. These were to depict the Catholic priest occupied with the various functions in his parish, that is amidst his people, with the children in school, in his relations to his fellow priests, in his contact with the outside world, and finally as reflecting the spirit of prayer and study within the privacy of the presbytery. Such a series, it was hoped, would become the vehicle of varied pastoral and theological teaching, and at the same time introduce into the magazine a feature of entertainment free from

those didactic elements which, when continuous, are apt to weary the average reader.

The writer of *Geoffrey Austin* appeared to possess the qualifications for the desired work. He evidently excelled both in the art of illustrating principles through pleasing narrative, and in emphasizing whatever contributed to the moral and religious betterment of the people. His writing showed, beneath a slightly pessimistic enthusiasm, a clear perception of both lights and shadows in our modern religious and public life. At the same time he had the wit and humor which allowed him to apply correctives without greatly irritating the reader. In short, here were the genial temperament and balance of judgment that could, despite certain prepossessions, discriminate between the extreme views of the optimist and the misanthrope in matters of ethics and religion. I had no doubt of the author's willingness to fall in with my proposal to write the desired series. It would be necessary, however, first of all to find him. The obvious way was to inquire from the publishers, the Messrs. M. H. Gill and Son, of Dublin. This I did.

To my amazement I learnt that *Geoffrey Austin* had had but a limited sale. The ostensible reason lay in the fact that the author had criticized the system of education in Ireland, and in doing so had seemed to cast aspersions upon Irish character and faith. His picture of a modern intermediate school under clerical management had been declared to be extraordinary, unreal, and imaginary, not to say distorted. Although the literary merit of the novel was recognized, the critics thought that it was calculated to do more harm than good, by leaving the impression that the condition depicted as existing at Mayfield College was typical of private schools throughout Ireland. As a matter of fact only a few literary journals had taken notice of the book, while some of them had expressed open resentment of the implied charges.

There was a species of truth in the general impression as here indicated. The writer of *Geoffrey Austin* had said some

hard things about the apathy of Irishmen and their repugnance to certain wholesome changes; but it must have been clear to any unprejudiced reader that it was not the author's purpose, even in the remotest sense, to disparage his country. Indeed the extraordinary qualities of the narrative, the writer's accurate delineation of certain types of human nature, his power of poetic expression, were but the vehicle of the plainly revealed purpose to arouse interest in the work of raising the educational standard of his country. This design formed the core of the story, as might have been patent to anyone who was not preoccupied with an oversensitive estimate of existing values.

Having obtained the author's address, I promptly communicated with him for the purpose of engaging his services for our magazine. Of the results I shall have occasion to speak later on. The subject of *Geoffrey Austin* has been introduced here mainly because it became the occasion of that literary activity which not only produced a new type of clerical novel in the English language, and at once made its author famous, but at the same time established that friendly and intimate relation between the pastor of Doneraile and myself which has led to the writing of this biography.

PART I

AN ACCOUNT OF PATRICK SHEEHAN'S CHILDHOOD, HIS TRAINING, STUDENT LIFE, AND EARLY YEARS AS A PRIEST IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND

1852–1894

I

PATRICK SHEEHAN — THE BOY

THE Sheehans and O'Sheehans[1] are very numerous among the clans of old Munster, and without attempting to trace the particular sept to which Patrick Aloysius, the father of our subject, belonged, it may be noted that the escutcheon of the ancient Sheehans is singularly suggestive of the character and life-purpose of Patrick junior. It bears on an azure field a dove carrying an olive-branch above a green mound; the motto beneath is "Pro Virtute Patria." Nothing could be more apposite than this device, if the disposition and character of Canon Sheehan were to be translated into symbolic language. He was the gentlest of men, a bearer of peace, and a true Sheehan in the sense in which the Irish word is commonly used for a "lover" of his kind and of his country.

The Baptismal Register of the parish of Mallow in the diocese of Cloyne states that Patrick Sheehan,[2] son of Patrick Sheehan and Joanna Regan, was baptized on the 17th day of March, 1852, by the parish priest of St. Mary's Church, Dr. J. C. Wigmore, the sponsors being Timothy Cronin and Mary Ann Relehan.

The best testimony to the worth of the Sheehan family is to be found in the virtues of mind and heart which the parents of young Patrick transmitted to and developed in their children, and which led three of them to consecrate their lives to the service of religion. Two elder sisters, Hannah and Margaret, became nuns in the Order of Mercy; Patrick entered the priesthood; a younger brother,

[1] The name is variously spelled, and different interpretations may be read out of Sheaun, Sheehun, Sheehan, Sheean, Shean, and Sheahan.

[2] The name is here spelled *Sheahan*.

Dennis Bernard, is still living, and is engaged in the Irish Civil Service as Auditor of the local Government Board. They have all given evidence of literary talent. A fifth child, John, died at the age of five years, and is buried with his parents in the Mallow cemetery.

As soon as Patrick was competent he was sent to the local National School. In one of his stories he gives us a glimpse of his early teacher, Michael Francis O'Connor, whose "range of attainments was limited; but what he knew he knew well, and could impart to his pupils. He did his duty conscientiously by constant, unremitting care; and he emphasized his teaching by frequent appeals to the ferule." The little pupil was "fair-haired and delicate," like his sister Maggie, but of a wholly different type from his elder sister Hannah, who was dark and of an active turn. Patrick was silent and meditative. He had "large wistful blue eyes that looked at you as if they saw something behind and beyond you." As he sees himself in later years, he was "a bit of a dreamer, and when the other lads were shouting at play he went alone to some copse or thicket, and with a book, or more often without one, would sit and think, and look dreamily at floating clouds or running stream; and then, with a sigh, go back to his desk."

His natural and early bent appears to have been toward the priesthood, though at one time — so we are told — he expressed a desire to study for the Bar; but in this he did not receive encouragement, for the outlook was unpromising. The first evidence of a vocation to the priesthood reveals itself through the boy's admiration for a "great tall student" from Maynooth. He recalls this hero's homecoming to his native town for vacation. One summer night the seminarist "took the sleepy boy on his shoulders and wrapped him round with the folds of his great Maynooth cloak that was clasped with brass chains running through lions' heads, carrying him out under the stars, as the warm summer air played around them." [1]

[1] *A Spoiled Priest and other Stories.* Chap. II.

Although naturally of a reserved and solitary disposition, the little lad took an occasional, and then not merely platonic but thoroughly active interest in all kinds of sport. He was also fond of music, and had a remarkably sweet voice, which did good service in the Boys' Choir of the parish church, organized by Father Horgan, the junior curate. The pastor was the Rev. Dr. McCarthy, who later became Bishop of Cloyne. To him Patrick's father at his death left the guardianship of the four children, together with the income of a modest property. Both parents died within a few months of each other when Patrick was only ten years of age.

In a memorandum of his boyhood days, under the title of "Moonlight of Memory," partial repetitions of which are to be found throughout his various writings, he says:

How beautifully do the plain prosaic limestone walls of the old market house at Mallow, which crowned and terminated the New Street in which I was born, stand out amid the scenes of the little theatre of my existence. I well remember it in the sunlight and in the moonlight — the exact flat stone which we singled out for our balls; the niches which were such a trouble to me; the old weighing machine; the vast and tremendous circuses whose splendours, as of Arabian nights, were hidden within, under locked gates. How romantic, seen in the light of memory, was the dear old glen, where we first learnt the art of poetry in its wild flowers — the primrose and the cowslip, and the wild hyacinth whose fragrance, like the perfume that hangs around old letters, comes back across the years. And the brook narrowing and broadening, which we leaped in the summer days, where we fished for dollies and sticklebacks, and where we wondered at the gorgeous dragonflies that swam and sang in the air of the hot noon. And the little chalet on the cliff, with its fringe of firs, that looked so beautiful and poetical against the sunset, and the notes of the cuckoo and the throstle, recalling the lines of Wordsworth:

"Come forth into the light of things,
Let nature be your teacher."

From such surroundings the naturally contemplative and poetic mind of the boy received constant nourishment.

His childish observations became incentives to meditation on the significance of nature and its relation to the actualities of life, and these reflections formed a marked trait of his later writings.

There was another sentiment which began to take root at this period in the boy's nature — that of intense patriotism, steadily growing with the realization of the wrongs which his people had suffered for centuries. This feeling made him all through his life deeply sensitive to the dangers that would beset his countrymen, if they should fail to be prepared for a right use of that freedom which the promise of Emancipation was apparently bringing within actual reach.

Many a summer evening we watched and envied the little batches of Fenians going up to drill in the dark recesses of Buckley's wood. For the sublime and sacred feeling that took these tradesmen away from work and pleasure was also the passion of our youth. The shadow of '48, and the wild music that came out of that shadow were upon us, and we were watching with beating hearts and kindling eyes the preludes of 1867.

Among other things he relates an experience on one of the dark winter nights of the year 1865:

I see now the short well knit figure of the ballad-singer in the Main street; I see the gaslight from the shop flickering on his coat, shining and glistening because the rain was pouring in cataracts upon his clothes. I see his pale and stern looking face, his black hair falling down in ringlets on his shoulders, the short black mustache; the right hand hid away in his breast; I hear his voice ringing up along the deserted street, that fine ballad of Innominatus, called in the Irish Anthologies *The Fenian Man.* I remember how it thrilled us to hear the words:

"But once more returning,
Within our veins burning
The fires that illumined dark Aherlow's glen;
We raise the old cry anew,
Slogan of Con and Hugh:
Out and make way for the Fenian men."

Again we find him describing a youthful member of the Fenian brotherhood, a manly lad who would gather the

boys of the town in a corner of the old market house and address them thus:

Look, boys, at those captains of the Irish Brigade, their white faces, their hands trembling, their hearts throbbing. And why? Because the sorrow of Ireland and the sadness of Ireland, and her eternal hopes, so often defeated, have come down upon them. And they remember what a little thing was between them and victory but for the traitor. Believe me, boys, you needn't much mind the man who flings his caubeen in the air and shouts that he'll shed his last drop of blood for Ireland. But whenever you hear: "God save Ireland" or "God prosper old Ireland," and you see the man's fingers twitch and the lines drawn down on his face and the color fly from his cheeks — ah yes, boys, mind him.

Those Fenians were silent, strong men, into whose characters some stern and terrible energy had been infused. There were no braggarts among them. Their passion was too deep for words; it was an all-consuming, fierce, unswerving and unselfish love for Ireland. They did not love their motherland because it gave them a scrap of her bogs or fields or mountains; or because they could sell her interests at a brigand's valuation; but because she was Ireland who had wrongs to be avenged, and sorrows to be redressed, and because they hoped — every man and boy among them — to see the day when they would help to crown that dear old motherland with the royal symbols of independence. Yes, indeed the blood runs freely in the veins of boys' youth, and our veins ran fire under the influence of that glorious passion.

But these were sober thoughts that substituted themselves only on occasions for the ordinary enthusiasms of a boy's life. It is pleasant to hear him tell of the youthful sports, for it betokens his sturdy admiration of prowess and an active interest in the public games of his town, though one would hardly have expected it in a delicate lad who was so fond of solitude and books.

At that time football was almost unknown at Mallow. Hurling and handball in winter, cricket in summer, were the universal games. Every lane, every street, had its cricket club; and high above all, and dominating all, was the M. C. C., the magic letters that floated on the flag hanging above the little shanty in the

field to the east of the "monastery." What then must have been the mighty attraction that took us schoolboys away from such an arena on a certain hot summer afternoon, and flung us, a wild disordered mass, into the Main Street? Nothing but the report that the police had surrounded the house of John Sullivan, at the corner of Carmichael's lane, and had placed him under arrest while searching every room for papers. We were not disappointed. There, inside the shop at the window we could see the prisoner, erect as usual and unconcerned, chatting with the constables that filled the place. He had on his usual white coat (he was a baker), and was stroking his short beard. Presently the District Inspector came downstairs. He had found nothing "to compromise the prisoner." "No wonder," he adds, "for among the constables present were a number of sworn Fenians."

Patrick Sheehan, together with another boy[1] of nearly his own age, thus came to imbibe certain ideals which made them look on their native town with pride. Their ambition was no doubt also kindled by the knowledge that Mallow had given birth to some famous men of recent times. There was the venerable Archbishop Purcell of the American Catholic Church, the late Sir Edward Sullivan, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Sir Richard Quain, the great medical authority, and Thomas Davis, the Irish poet and patriot. Later on, our two young Irish striplings were to add their own names to this list of Mallow celebrities.

These glimpses of his boyhood give us a fair idea of his early surroundings. From them he imbibed very readily that sense of partnership with nature which in time made his communings with the land and sea and sky a daily habit; they fostered that liking for outdoor exercise which, while in seeming contrast with his ingrained preference for cloistered life, preserved in him the freshness that marked all his tastes. They also throw light upon the diffident ardor of his patriotism, and explain a certain sadness that clung to his sanguine hopes of the ultimate regeneration of his people by the baptism of a glorious liberty won through hard struggle.

[1] William O'Brien.

There is ample proof, however, that the boy did not altogether miss the elixir of joys that come to the average child under wholesome conditions of life; and the atmosphere of his home and school was an eminently healthy one, particularly in its moral aspect. In later years he took a deep and absorbing interest in the children committed to his care, and he used to say: "We should pour into young lives all the wine and oil of gladness we may, consistently with the discipline that will fit them for the future struggle." A former schoolmate of Patrick Sheehan writes of him: "As a boy he was remarkably gentle in manner, and somewhat reserved. In school he was known to be very attentive and always prepared his lessons well. He was also fond of cricket and at times took a lively part in our youthful sports."

His talent for mathematics was exceptional, and during the last two years at the National School he gave most of his attention to geometry and algebra. The fruits of this application showed themselves not only in his subsequent fondness for the study of the physical sciences, especially astronomy, but in his clear and logical reasoning on any practical subject that offered room for difference of opinion as to consequences.

The period of boyish gladness was not to be long for him ere the clouds began to appear and bade him note the more sober aspects of things around him. In the summer of 1863 his father died, and in February of the following year the widowed mother followed her husband. For a little while, during the days of bereavement, the management of the young family devolved upon the elder sister, who was still at school. Soon after this Father John McCarthy, guardian of the children, sent the two daughters to complete their education at the Loreto Convent in Fermoy.

II

ST. COLMAN'S — FERMOY

IN the spring of 1866, at the age of fourteen, Patrick Sheehan was sent to St. Colman's College, whither his younger brother followed him. In a memorandum he noted the day of his entrance, the sixth of April, as an important anniversary.[1]

St. Colman's is a preparatory training school in the diocese of Cloyne, where boys receive a classical education fitting them for entrance to the philosophical department of the Theological Seminary, or to the academic courses that lead to the learned professions. The college

[1] All through his life he retained an affectionate attachment to this his early Alma Mater. Almost the first income he derived from his literary labors was devoted to partly rebuilding and decorating the college chapel in which he placed a beautiful altar as a token of gratitude. The act has, since his death, been memorialized in an inscription which meets the visitor at the entrance of the chapel.

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF
VERY REV. P. A. CANON SHEEHAN, D.D., P.P.
DONERAILE,
WHOSE GENEROSITY LARGELY HELPED TO BUILD
THIS CHAPEL
HE DIED OCT. 5, 1913.

BY ORDER OF
THE MOST REV. R. BROWNE, D.D.,
LORD BISHOP OF CLOYNE,
AN ANNIVERSARY REQUIEM MASS
IS TO BE CELEBRATED FOR THE REPOSE
OF HIS SOUL ON THE 5TH DAY OF OCTOBER
EACH YEAR.
R.I.P.

---

was then, as it is now, conducted, under the supervision of the bishop of the diocese, by a competent staff of secular priests and laymen as professors and tutors.

The fact that Canon Sheehan in his novels frequently relates personal experiences and impressions may lead readers of *Geoffrey Austin*, who are not familiar with the circumstances, to suspect that St. Colman's furnished him with the characteristics of college life described in that story. This would be an error. So far as the detailed descriptions of "Mayfield" correspond to any actual locality, they are those of Gayfield House, at Donnybrook, Dublin, a school of that time founded to meet the requirements of secondary education for students preparing to enter the higher Civil Service. This institution was for a time attended by our author's brother, and it was thus that Patrick Sheehan became acquainted with some of its features. They are not and were not, of course, peculiar to any one establishment of the kind.

With this reservation, however, we may assume that the characteristic tendencies in the student life of Geoffrey Austin are identical with those of young Sheehan during his stay at Fermoy. The teaching staff introduced in his sketch of the Mayfield school naturally offered him a convenient opportunity for enlarging on his preferences. The boy's predominant love for the classics may be traced to his association with men of whom he draws admirable pictures in such characters as "Mr. Dowling," the professor of Greek; "Mr. Ferris," the teacher of mathematics, and that odd type of old-fashioned simplicity and self-effacement, "Mr. Messing," who not only engendered in his young pupil's mind a love for music and the beauties of nature, but introduced him to the mysticism of the German poets.

Some of the author's notes of this period indicate his growing determination to enter the priesthood, while at the same time they point the direction in which his faculties were tending for their further development.

After a few months at St. Colman's he returned for his summer vacation to Mallow, where his elder sister had in

the meantime entered the Convent of Mercy, and where he met once more the former associates of his schooldays. He writes:[1]

I recall how one beautiful night in August of 1866, four of us young lads walked up and down the main street from Tuckey's-hill to Chapel-lane. It was a glorious night, the moonlight flooding the whole street without throwing a shadow from the houses. We were chatting about a hundred things. Then the town clock struck ten, and just at the hill we paused. One of our group, the oldest, said to me who was then at home from St. Colman's for the first holidays: "What are you going to do with yourself?" — "I suppose the Church," I answered. "Ah," he said with a sigh, "that was my idea, too. I haven't had much happiness since I abandoned it." The speaker was young James O'Brien. He could not have been more than eighteen; but they had made him captain of the revolutionary forces. — How well I remember him. The strong square face, dimpled all over with curious lines when he smiled; the tall sinewy athletic figure, the broad shoulders, the erect poise and military gait of the boy. — Ay de mi — what might have been.

Of this same lad, James O'Brien,[2] our author writes in another place:

A few months later, when the snow was thick upon the ground, he put aside his civilian jacket, and, like Emmet, donned his green uniform, slung his revolver around his neck, and having slipped unobserved from the house, trudged along the six miles to Ballynockin, where he met Captain Mackey and a contingent of unarmed men from Cork. They brought out the women and children from the police barrack, and when the men refused to surrender, instantly set fire to the place. The sergeant and four constables were only saved from terrible death by the intervention of the priest, Canon Neville, who commanded the police to surrender at once, shouting to them that he himself would see them exonerated from all blame with their superiors. Then a detachment of military stationed at Purcell's of Dromore came up; and the unarmed Fenians dispersed. The next day James

[1] "Moonlight of Memory."

[2] A brother of William O'Brien, the author of *When we were Boys* and member of Parliament successively for Mallow, Tyrone, and Cork.

O'Brien was arrested and lodged in Mallow Bridewell for three weeks, awaiting trial.

These were stirring times everywhere in the south of Ireland, and events, as young Sheehan and his fellow students at St. Colman's witnessed them at intervals, tended to rouse their patriotic feelings to the utmost.

It was in March of that year (1867) about the middle of the month, while the long flank of the Galtee mountains was a mass of glistening ice, that the reports reached our college of the Fenian forces having been surrounded in Kilcloony-wood. Peter O'Neill Crowley, they said, had been killed with English bullets on the banks of the mountain stream. He had previously ordered his men to flee and save themselves. They said it was only at his earnest entreaty that captains Kelly and McClure had consented to leave him and withdraw. Peter Crowley himself had continued to keep at bay the entire British regiment and a posse of police, by dodging from tree to tree, and firing steadily at the advancing soldiers until at last his ammunition gave out. When he had fallen, pierced with bullets, he asked one of the men for a priest. Fortunately Father Tim O'Connell, the curate of Michelstown, was near by, knowing of the fray and the danger. He ran to the dying man's aid and gave him the last sacraments. Crowley's own people came to bury him.

I remember well the evening on which that remarkable funeral took place. It was computed that at least five thousand men took part in the procession. They shouldered the coffin of the dead patriot over mountain and valley and river, until they placed the sacred burden down by the sea, and under the shadow of the church of Ballymacoda. I recall how a group of us young lads shivered in the cold March wind on the college terrace at Fermoy, and watched the dark masses of men swaying over the bridge, the yellow coffin conspicuous in their midst. We caught another glimpse of the funeral cortege as it passed the sergeant's lodge. Then we turned away with tears of sorrow and anger.

He reflects upon the great strength and fierce force that lay in all these men who

walked forever under the shadow of the scaffold. Two years later James O'Brien,[1] who had been sentenced to be hanged,

[1] This is no doubt James F. X. O'Brien, M.P.

drawn and quartered, but was afterwards set free, visited the Presentation Convent at Fermoy to see his sister who was a nun there. The bishop, who was in Fermoy at the time, had asked the liberated patriot to dine at the college. Probably at that time Dr. Keane was the most popular and well beloved bishop in Ireland. He deserved it. He had the reputation of being a strong, almost an extreme nationalist. I was too young to understand. I only knew that the newspapers were fond of quoting some words which he addressed to the students at the Irish College in Paris: "Gentlemen, remember that your first duty is to God; your second to your country." This evening Mr. O'Brien was late, and dinner had been partly gone through when he arrived. The little quiet figure dressed in grey had stolen half way up the hall when he was observed. Then the whole body of priests and students sprang to their feet, and gave him an ovation that a king might envy.

Canon Sheehan, in recalling these early impressions of his boyhood, mentions the names of the men who were foremost in the political struggle of which he was a silent but interested witness. He describes among other episodes the popular scenes on occasion of the election of a certain advocate, Sullivan, who had been made Solicitor General for Ireland, and who found it necessary to contest the seat for Mallow. This patriot was a popular speaker who, having reached the high pinnacle of his ambition, passed into oblivion among his people, "for," writes the Canon,

it is a remarkable fact and one that I should like to impress on the minds of our youthful generation, that the muse of Irish History has a curious knack of blotting out every name, no matter how illustrious for a moment, that has not served the cause of the motherland; whilst she embalms forever in her pages the very humblest who have given their lives to her sacred causes. I suppose not one man in a million could tell to-day the name of the judge who sentenced the Manchester martyrs to death; but every Irish schoolboy knows the name of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien. Who can tell the names of all the distinguished judges, attorney generals, crown advocates, sergeants at law, who prosecuted or sentenced the patriots of 1798 or 1848 or 1867? And who can forget Emmet, Wolfe Tone, the Sheares, Mitchel, Martin, Kick-

ham? The little town by the Black Water had given not a few able men to the woolsack and bench, to the Church, to medicine, to art, and to history. Yet no one asks where these men are buried, or cares to see the places where they were born. But every school lad in Mallow can point out where Thomas Davis first saw the light; or the high house in which William O'Brien spent his boyhood days.

Father Sheehan adverts to the fact that in those days the intercourse between Protestants and Catholics was exceedingly happy and cordial. These relations of intelligent fellowship and coöperation in all matters of civil and social interest endured without any loss to the dignity of the Catholic faith; and they were incidentally shown with touching unanimity in the tribute paid to Canon Sheehan at Mallow on the occasion of his death.

In 1867, during the second year of Patrick's residence at St. Colman's, his younger sister, who also had entered the Convent of Mercy at Mallow and who in religion was called Sister Mary Augustine, fell seriously ill. She had been a singularly bright child, with a fund of humor that made her a general favorite. She had followed her elder sister into the religious life after their return from the Loreto school, and though of naturally delicate health, had been happy and active in her new sphere. During the summer she contracted a cold which developed into consumption. She died on 7th of November, 1868, after making her vows by a special dispensation, before the expiration of her term of novitiate, on her deathbed.

The affectionate relations existing between the two boys and their sisters had been intensified by the temporary separation while the former were at college, and although they saw each other at intervals, the young boyish hearts craved the nearer presence of those who had guarded them ever since the death of their parents. The fresh bereavement, therefore, came upon them as an unlooked-for blow and a deep sorrow.

Patrick had still another year at St. Colman's before entering the theological seminary, a step on which he

was now earnestly resolved, under the direction of his guardian. The latter enjoyed the boy's fullest confidence as well as reverence, and we picture him as the "Father Costello" of *Geoffrey Austin*, at least in the quality of his gentle and fatherly spirit, the memory of which still lives among the old people of Mallow.

The college list of honor students at the end of the summer term of 1868 gives first place to Patrick Sheehan in Geometry, Algebra, Greek, History, and English Composition. He took second place on the medal list in Christian Doctrine, third place in Latin, and fifth in French. Accordingly he received premiums in all his classes. Strangely his name is omitted from the Elocution class. Father John Burton, parish priest of Donoughmore, who entered St. Colman's in 1868, writes that Patrick Sheehan (or Sheahan, as the name is entered on the college register) was then regarded as the leading student, and occupied the position of prefect in the college.

On completing his course at St. Colman's young Sheehan headed the list in the Concursus for entrance to the higher Seminary. There had been some prospect of his obtaining a place among those who were being selected to study at the Irish College in Rome; but as there were two vacancies at Maynooth for students from the Cloyne diocese, it was finally decided that he should apply there for admission. In after years he greatly regretted that he had not had the opportunity of completing his studies in Rome, as he considered it an incomparable adjunct to a priest's education to imbibe the ancient spirit of the Church at its *fons et origo* — to have seen and heard Christ's Vicar, and to have lived and dreamed amidst the glorious monuments and temples of the past in the heart of the eternal Mother of Christendom.

III

MAYNOOTH

AT the end of August, 1869, young Sheehan went to Maynooth to take his examination for the class of Philosophy.

The intellectual and economic life at Maynooth was at this time in a state of transition and unrest. The passing of the Irish Church Act that same year (1869) had changed the civil status of the college. The allowance hitherto made for its support by the Government, first under the annual grant of 1795, and again in 1845 under the permanent endowment fund proposed by Sir Robert Peel, was converted by the Gladstone Act into a temporary subsidy, only partly sufficient for the maintenance of this great seat of learning.

Whilst it was a distinct advantage to have the college withdrawn from the control of the State, and placed exclusively under the management of the bishops of Ireland, the problem of its future support had to be solved. It became necessary, for the time, to charge a limited tuition fee at least for students who were not nominated to previously established burses. The new status called for a revision and amendment of the Constitutions and Rules governing the college. It also necessitated certain departures from the traditional program of studies; and this in turn involved some changes in the staff of professors. Those in charge of the great central Seminary for Ireland at that time were men of exceptional qualifications. Most of them had made their mark in the literary and scientific world. Among the best known was Dr. P. A. Murray, author of the *Tractatus theologici;* Dr. Gerald Molloy, whose *Geology and Revelation* was just then being published and making considerable stir by its originality and

thoroughness as a scientific analysis of exegetical difficulties. There were also Dr. James O'Kane, a recognized authority in Christian Liturgy; Dr. George Crolly, author of *De Jure et Justitia*, and a number of other works. The professor who probably exercised most influence on the student body was Dr. Charles William Russell, the scholarly president. He was well versed in modern languages, was an accomplished writer in English, translator of Leibnitz's *System of Theology*, of Canon Schmid's *Tales for the Young*, a regular contributor to the *Dublin Review*, *Edinburgh Review*, *North British Review*, *Chambers' Journal*, *The Month*, etc. To him someone had applied the medieval text

Ultra modum placidus, dulcis et benignus,
Ob aetatis senium candidus ut cygnus,
Blandus et affabilis et amari dignus,
In se Sancti Spiritus possidebat pignus.

Of him Newman, who affectionately dedicates to him his *Loss and Gain*, says: "My dear friend Dr. Russell, the President of Maynooth, had perhaps more to do with my conversion than anyone else. . . . He was always gentle, mild, unobtrusive, uncontroversial. He let me alone."

Under teachers of such recognized merit Maynooth had strengthened its reputation as a permanent abode of advanced scholarship. The *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, established a few years before (in 1864), was understood to draw its inspiration largely from Maynooth.

Nevertheless the authorities made no secret of the fact that there was disagreement among the faculty, besides general dissatisfaction with the management. The routine of studies had become unsettled, and there was a recognized neglect of discipline that made student life uncomfortable for those who needed the strengthening influence of supervision and direction. To a youth of Patrick Sheehan's sensitive disposition the lack of orderly and positive guidance was distressing. His high ideal of what a candidate for the sacred ministry should be had led him to look for definite incentives in the training of his intellectual

and spiritual life at the Seminary. The actual state of things proved a disappointment for the time being. Archbishop Healy of Tuam, the historian of Maynooth, has left us a candid record [1] of what the discipline of the college was at this period; and while there is ample palliation in the reasons given to explain the manner in which the Seminary was being conducted, the facts must be reckoned with in accounting for the lack of enthusiasm on the part of our young seminarist, and for a certain distaste for his studies which marked his career at Maynooth and of which he made no disguise.

There can be no doubt that Patrick Sheehan had superior talent, and also that he was well disposed to use it. On entering Maynooth he had passed his examination for the Logic class. It should be stated here that this was no easy task; in fact a very large proportion of the students who entered Maynooth failed therein. For these there was an alternative. If they did not pass Greek and Latin (which included the free reading of Demosthenes, Sophocles, Longinus, Tacitus, etc.), History ancient and modern, and Mathematics (Geometry and Algebra), they were tested for Rhetoric, which was less rigorous. To enter in Rhetoric meant an additional year of preparatory study before being admitted to Philosophy. If the student failed in Rhetoric, he was admitted to the lowest department, that of the Humanities. This arrangement allowed the student an opportunity to review the studies in which he was weak. Later on, the Humanities class was entirely abolished and that of Rhetoric took its place, aiming at proficiency in the classics. To the higher Mathematics, as well as Physics and Astronomy, was given a separate year, following upon the study of Mental Philosophy.

Young Sheehan's excellent preparation at St. Colman's enabled him, without much difficulty, to escape both Rhetoric and Humanities, and he was allowed, despite his

[1] *Maynooth College — Its Centenary History*. By the Most Rev. John Healy, D.D., LL.D., M.R.I.A., 1795–1895. — Dublin; Browne and Nolan. Chap. XVI., "Domestic Annals."

youth, to take up Logic at once. This fact shows him to have been a remarkable boy, for out of a hundred students only about five on the average attained a similar distinction.

In estimating his subsequent successes it must be remembered that he was not only younger than most of his companions, but that the bulk of the students in his class had already spent one or two years at Maynooth, in the preparatory classes.

The text-book was Jennings's *Logicae seu Philosophiae Rationalis Compendium.* William Jennings had taught philosophy at Maynooth from 1852 to 1862. The first half of the annual term was devoted to Logic, the second to Metaphysics and Ethics.

To Patrick Sheehan this new branch of study was a sore disappointment. His distaste may be attributed to a variety of causes, apart from the method of teaching in vogue at the the time. The boy's poetic and somewhat contemplative turn inclined him naturally toward an eclectic culture which found little satisfaction in the normal rigidity besetting the study of Logic as treated in Scholastic Philosophy. Here the student had to face the dry-as-dust matter of continuous definitions, categories, and abstract distinctions. For fully a year or more his memory and understanding were drilled in the rudiments of a science the terminology of which was new, and quite alien to that of his former studies. What added to his difficulties was the fact that the language of the professor and of the text-book was for the most part Latin, which, though he was able to translate it, he had not yet learned to use as a medium of thinking. There was lacking too in the method of teaching these disciplines that concrete form of illustration which gives to ordinary studies, even of science, a definite attraction. In short, the student was being taught the methods of abstraction; simultaneously he learnt how to define his impressions and to attain the habit of translating these impressions into inductions or deductions on which to base his arguments for truth. It was a weary process which, whilst not unprofitable as a mental dis-

cipline, could in most cases be supplied by the spontaneous development of that natural gift called common sense.

Nor was this unattractive novelty of study relieved by the pursuit simultaneously of the higher Mathematics, the physical sciences or Astronomy, and kindred disciplines, sometimes added to the course of Philosophy.

Where the program of scholastic studies is not all too absorbing, the tyro in the domain of Logic and metaphysical science is permitted, if not invited, to disport himself in the attractive *hortus conclusus* of the muses and of polite literature. Here he meets with new and to him delightful philosophical speculations, of which at this age he begins to get his first taste, causing him to appreciate the value of what he had touched or seen, but could not enjoy before.

In the case of young Sheehan this latter opportunity was somewhat limited, if not frowned upon by some of the men who had charge of arranging the curriculum of studies. Pope Pius IX had shortly before issued his famous Encyclical *Quanta Cura*, directed against the modern naturalism, with its crop of Communism and Socialism. Simultaneously the Syllabus of 1864 had been sent to all the bishops, pointing out that adherence to the old traditions of the Church's teaching and the approved scholastic methods in our seminaries was the only proper antidote to the virus which was being distilled into young minds by the popular philosophies at the secular universities. On the other hand there were also to be combated the insinuating doctrines of Jansenism which had strangely clung to the theological seminaries of France. Hither many of the Irish students had been obliged to turn for their ecclesiastical training. These brought back with them to Ireland French books, French manners, and French piety.[1] A third danger was apprehended from the false tradi-

[1] At one time the professors at Maynooth were largely drawn from the French clergy expatriated during the Revolution, and French was almost exclusively spoken at table, a fact that caused considerable resentment among those who were not accustomed to the language. Dr. George Crolly in one of his memoirs tells of a conspiracy among the native professors to talk "Irish" only. (*Life of Archbishop William Crolly*, p. xxiii.)

tionalism propounded with much ingenuity by men like Bonetty and his school, who made the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne* their organ.

In the effort to combat these errors and to promote the reform of studies on the lines prescribed, the authorities insisted on a thorough course of fundamental philosophy in harmony with scholastic tradition. They also deemed it advisable to limit the programs of studies by abolishing the chair of Humanities; and although this measure was not at once carried out, the avowed purpose to do so naturally tended to create an atmosphere of discouragement for those who showed some preference for *belles lettres*.

It were not surprising if under these circumstances Patrick Sheehan had failed to correspond at once to the expectations of intellectual alertness to which his previous record at St. Colman's had given rise. He himself, as already stated, was thoroughly disappointed at missing those impulses in the direction of his studies which stimulate thought and arouse a healthy ambition toward higher achievement. In reality he found that the alternative of the didactic drudgery of the Logic class had to be sought in the equally dry practice of catechetical exercises. The students in Philosophy were required to write at regular intervals essays on moral and doctrinal subjects, much as they might be expected to do in Ethics or Theology. The purpose of this method was, of course, admirable, and may in some cases have produced good fruit. It was calculated to supply a systematic stimulus toward the higher ecclesiastical studies which lay before the student, and which would prepare him for the work of orthodox teaching in harmony with the general reform movement. But it also accounts for the fact that our collegian "found his scholastic studies dry and uninteresting, not understanding their application and practical importance." As a proof that Patrick Sheehan, despite these drawbacks, gave ample satisfaction to his professor of Philosophy, we have the fact that at the end of the term he was allowed to "jump" the class of Natural Philosophy and enter at once on his

Theology course. Down to the end of his life he showed a preference for studies in physical science and particularly for Astronomy. His early proficiency in these branches warranted his being dispensed from the regular class drill therein.

The theological course proper covered three years. The principal text-book hitherto in use was *Thomas de Charmes*, an author whose Jansenistic tendencies had not yet been sufficiently modified by the revisions of Desorges and later writers. Subsequently Perrone and Gury were introduced, but for a time the two branches of moral and dogmatic theology were still being taught after the mind of the old teachers who had a fair claim to veneration. By a special provision incorporated in the Rules of the Maynooth Seminary, the future professors were to be drawn largely from the Dunboyne Establishment. These students, since they followed a somewhat longer course than the rest, were elected to act as tutors for the others. It seems doubtful whether or no this arrangement contributed to the improvement of discipline.

Whatever discouraging effect the above mentioned conditions had upon the young seminarist, they could not fully strip him of the enthusiasm for the classics in which he had made a success at Fermoy; and indeed he seems to have sought every opportunity which his present position afforded to follow his natural bent in that direction. From some of the instructors he received a certain amount of encouragement. Such were the Rev. Hugh O'Rourke of the Tuam diocese, who also taught the French class; and another Dunboyne man, the Rev. Edward O'Brien. But these were not his regular professors during most of the course.

Being an untiring reader, he exercised his intellectual energies in many directions covering a large field of useful information. And although his browsing in the literary close of the college library was both limited and of a desultory nature, it afforded him a welcome substitute for the somewhat unpalatable provender of the class-room.

Far back in the 'sixties literature had to be studied surreptitiously, and under the uncongenial, but very effective, shadow of Perrone or Récéveur. It was a serious thing to be detected in such clandestine studies, and I dare say our superiors were quite right in insisting that we should rigidly adhere to the system of pure scholasticism, which was a college tradition. But was not our President one of the greatest of European litterateurs? And what danger could deter us from the sawpits of logic into the garden of literature — from *Barbara*, *Celarent*, *Darii*, into the moonlight and melody of Tennyson? [1]

It was in the library then that he sought the consolations of philosophy and the solution of its riddles. The modern literati on the bookshelves were all the more inviting in that they spoke in the vernacular. The numerous restrictions which the college rules placed on the junior students in the matter of reading may have served to concentrate his attention upon sources that were accessible. Only by special permission were the "philosophers" allowed to enter the general library, containing about forty thousand volumes. There were, however, some separate reading-rooms in which a number of select books on various subjects could be obtained. It was here that the young student found his chief solace.

One of the authors that attracted him particularly was Thomas Carlyle, who was then considered among popular critics one of the champions of modern philosophy. Carlyle had made two visits to Ireland; one of which (in 1866) occurred when Patrick Sheehan was still at St. Colman's College. The ovations given to the Scotch philosopher, just then elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, over Disraeli, who was also a candidate for the place of honor, had aroused a genuine enthusiasm among the collegians of Ireland. Apart from the brilliancy of his diction, the rare charm attaching to his theories, ethical, religious, and political, exercised a temporary fascination upon our student. He found moreover many traits in the author of *Sartor Resartus* that touched a kindred note and

[1] Books that influenced *Luke Delmege*. *Irish Monthly*, February, 1902.

wakened his personal sympathy. Carlyle's taste for mathematics, his appreciation of the literature of the ancients, even though he had acknowledged he had only a limited acquaintance with them, his freedom in criticizing, and a touch of serious satire by which he knew how to chastise irreverent flippancy in the advocates of pure agnosticism, — these notes exercised a powerful influence over the imagination of the youth. The study of Carlyle taught him, as he tells us, to appreciate German literature.

Although in later years Canon Sheehan's estimate of Carlyle's merits underwent considerable modification, bringing distrust and even a positive dislike for the Sage of Chelsea, both because of his attitude toward the Church and his disapproval of Gladstone's Home Rule policy, this change did not interfere with his studies of German literature then or later on. He shows a special fondness for Jean Paul Richter, the gentle satirist, who loved little children and who had a delicately sensitive appreciation of the secret beauties of nature, albeit he was able to put a very sharp edge on his really sound criticism of human depravity.

During this period Tennyson was writing in the English magazines parts of his *Idylls of the King*, the dreamy beauty of which cast its charm over our young student, who memorized whole pages of it. In later years he found much to criticize in Tennyson's archaic idealism. But he sought to imitate the exquisite forms of the great word-carver, even though he discovered in them the marks of the chisel and of the file. Wordsworth soothed him, despite the lack of virility that separates the Cumberland poet from great classics like Shakespeare and Goethe, the latter of whom Sheehan found too pagan, and the former too human, to admire without reserve. Swinburne, "supreme melodist of the language, magician who makes music as of heaven out of the discordant elements of the English tongue, master of alliteration and artistic antithesis," is to him but a preacher of voluptuousness and a portrayer of subtle and insinuating passion.

Next to Milton, Shelley, and Keats he was attracted by Browning, and even more by Ruskin, as might be expected. When later on he began to study Italian, he became enamored of the gems of Tuscan poetry, and especially of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. How well he assimilated all this, and other attractive literature, is amply apparent from his earlier books, notably his reveries *Under the Cedars and the Stars*, and among his novels, most perhaps in *The Triumph of Failure*.

The student at Maynooth was by no means hiding the talents God had given him. What he was acquiring was to be of immense service to him in later years both for the effective performance of his pastoral ministry and in the practice of that wider apostolate which he exercised through his writings. For it is quite certain that the habit of reading he indulged while at Maynooth tended to ripen his judgment, and make him familiar with the thoughts and feelings of the actual leaders of his day. Their views, even if not in conformity with the high standard of Catholic doctrine, were none the less of great value to him, since they indicated the attitude of the popular mind as contrasted with the demands of Christian faith. That faith was deeply planted in his heart, together with the inherited piety which his guardian and parish priest, Father McCarthy, had pledged him solemnly to hold sacred. There is among Sheehan's later descriptions one which seems to reflect his disposition at this period. It is the touching scene in *Geoffrey Austin*, in which the venerable pastor takes his young pupil, on the eve of his leaving for college, with him to the cemetery of his native town.

> We strolled along from grave to grave, and he told me the story of the occupant of each, and he vied with the epitaphs in charitableness, until at last we came to the spot where my own father and mother and sisters[1] were laid. We knelt and prayed together. As I rose he pressed his hand on my shoulder, that I might remain kneeling. Then he said, and it was dreadfully solemn: — "Next after the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies,

[1] The sisters were buried apart.

I know no place more sacred than this. You are kneeling near the sleeping forms of those who gave you life, and were linked with you in that love which perishes not nor decays. I make no doubt they are watching you now; and if anything disturbs their eternal peace, it is their anxiety about the years that are speeding towards you, and will be yours to make or mar for better, for worse. But one thing I ask you to promise me in their presence; you will never let a morning pass without placing yourself in the presence of God. Do you promise?" — "I promise." I rose from my knees as the knights rose at the presence of their phantom king, and we went home. And as we went he said many things to me which I had never heard before; and the mysteries of life and immortality were made very plain to me, in lessons which have been as a staff to the hand and as bread in the wilderness to the weary.[1]

It was this faith and piety that kept the young man safe from intellectual and moral harm amid untutored wanderings through many a field that might have proved a snare to a less fortified mind. Even while he was drawn to the speculations of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, as others have been drawn, he began to analyze their theories of life. In this way he made his subsequent study of theology at once interesting and profitable, for he cleared his thought on such subjects of doctrine as required the application of a sterling philosophical test. The instinct of a grace-given faith, and the teaching system of the Catholic Church, preserved him from the allurements of rationalism which breathes through much of the popular German literature cultivated by him at this time. His notes on these subjects, collected in later years, and presented without any show of systematic arrangement, just as though they were the outcome of his speculative moods in hours of leisure, give evidence of the care with which he garnered the fruits of his apparently desultory reading and study.

Meanwhile he was thoroughly conscientious in his class work, as is evident from the college records. During the three years of his theological course he was invariably

[1] Chap. I, "My Guardian," p. 9. (First Edition.)

among those who were detailed to write the "class pieces," that is to say, the men who, being distinguished in their classes, were selected to compete for honors at the end of the term. Of about a hundred such picked students in the various departments, from all the dioceses of Ireland, he ranked as a rule with the leaders in nearly every class.

In the Maynooth premium list of June 1874, during the last year of Patrick Sheehan's residence, his name stands first among the *Proxime accesserunt* in Sacred Scripture, fourth in Dogmatic, and sixth in Moral Theology.

A classmate from Limerick who remembered him well writes: "In my time at Maynooth, Cloyne diocese was accounted *crème de la crème* of the college. Not to mention his Lordship [1] . . . you had men of sweeping abilities, like the late parish priest of Macroom (Dr. Jeremiah Murphy); you had men of gentle sanctity, like Father Keenan, who joined the Eucharistic Fathers and died among them; and you had men like Canon Sheehan, who scarcely uttered a word, but read the heavens, and thought."

We have therefore to modify somewhat Father Matthew Russell's estimate when he writes: "It remains a puzzle to most men who knew Canon Sheehan in after days, and realized that his literary work as well as his pastoral wisdom were in truth the fruit of a laborious and close application of the years spent in the Seminary, how a youth of such exceptional ability was able to escape distinction during his Maynooth course so completely that, since he has become famous, many who were almost his contemporaries at college have been slow to believe that he ever was a student at Maynooth." [2]

As Patrick Sheehan had a naturally delicate constitution, his habits of close reading and retirement soon told on his health. He was obliged to spend much of his time

[1] Dr. Browne, the present Bishop of Cloyne.

[2] "Concerning the Author of *My New Curate*," in *Ecclesiastical Review*, January, 1902.

in the infirmary. It was while confined to his bed at the college, during the month of December, 1871, that a letter came to him announcing the death of his cherished and only surviving sister in the Convent at Mallow.

Sister Mary Stanislaus, though she had taken her vows as a Sister of Mercy, had yet in many ways continued to act a mother's part to young Patrick and his brother. It had been a great joy to her heart to see him enter the Seminary. She had looked forward with a sister's affectionate faith to the day when he would be ordained to the priesthood, and when he might celebrate his first Mass in his native town of Mallow, where she was teaching the little children of the parish school. Meanwhile she had encouraged him by her letters and on his visits to Mallow. It was but natural that he should lean on her, and that she should fill the large void but recently left in the boy's heart by the death of little Margaret, who had given him all the sunshine of her bright disposition while at home and at Fermoy, that she might help him to forget the loss of his parents. One who knew the two girls when they were about to leave school for the cloister speaks of their remarkably sweet and genial dispositions. The nuns who recall them later in the community describe them as cheerful, bright, industrious, and as edifying all with whom they came in contact by their sprightliness, their piety, and the high sense of religious obligation which animated them from first to last. They possessed, both of them, exceptional talents, though in directions widely apart, the one being of rather artistic temperament, while the other excelled in teaching and administrative ability.

Sister Mary Stanislaus had, after her religious profession, been engaged for some years as directress in the parish schools. Her energetic spirit was concentrated upon her work, which called at the time for the full exercise of her talent as organizer, for the national schools were passing through a new crisis under changed State legislation, which put the bishops at pains to raise the standard of Catholic training. Although not of robust health, her

cheerful and unselfish disposition amid her work had hidden all indications that the disease which had carried her sister to the grave was now slowly but surely making her its victim also. When finally she succumbed, and was obliged to take to her bed, she not only retained her spirit of resignation, but seemed to be pleased that God allowed her to make the sacrifice of her life. It meant, too, the sacrifice of her share in the progress of her cherished brother, — but then she would witness his consecration from her home in heaven.[1]

And with the approaching trial of death she was to miss even his last visit to her sick-bed. For when her own death came, he was ill and unable to go to her for a last earthly farewell. She had withheld the knowledge of her illness from him to the last, because she knew how it would grieve him; and now it was too late.

To his deep attachment and the wound which this bereavement caused in his heart he bore witness in after years. One day, while he was engaged in writing the death scene of young Alice Dean in *The Triumph of Failure*, a friend found him in tears over his manuscript. When

[1] To a nun who was very fond of her, and who on being called to another mission was bidding her farewell, she said: "Whenever you visit the Blessed Sacrament, dear Sister, and kneel before the little lamp in front of the tabernacle, say for me to our dearest Lord: 'May Sister Stanislaus live and be consumed for Thee alone!'" At a time when the disease had been particularly trying and when she had been left for some time to herself, the nun attending her found on her bed the following reflection, written in pencil, and as though in answer to one who had sympathized with her in the heaviness of her cross.

THAT CROSS

It comes to me on Angel's wings;
It comes from the throne of the King of kings;
It comes as an arrow from the Sacred Heart,
To wound my soul with its fiery dart.
It comes to prove if my heart is His own,
If in sorrow as in joy I am His alone.
Oh, shall I not think me a favored dove
To receive from my God this gift of love,
This gift — His choicest,
This gift from on high —
For Jesus to suffer, for Jesus to die!

asked the cause of his grief, he answered simply that he had been recalling memories of his elder sister. To the hour of his death he kept near him a small embroidered leather frame containing some strands of his two sisters' hair neatly braided together; and a little before the end came he showed it to his nurse with a touching reminder of the love he bore them.

There is a passage in *Under the Cedars and the Stars* in which he refers to this sister. "Strange, I never felt the proximity of father and mother. But my sisters, one in particular, the only dark haired in the family, has haunted me through life. I no more doubt of her presence and her light touch on the issues of my life, than I doubt of the breath of wind that flutters the tassle of the biretta in my hand. Yet what is strange is not her nearness but her farness." Though he never felt, as he said, the proximity of his parents, he not unfrequently referred to their sterling piety, particularly that of his father. He instanced the deep devotion of the latter when approaching Holy Communion. "He invariably remained on his knees for a full half hour," a practice which he taught his children to follow, even while they were still quite young.

Shortly after the death of Sister Mary Stanislaus, illness obliged Patrick Sheehan to leave Maynooth for a protracted vacation. He remained absent for the entire term of 1872–1873. During the remainder of his residence at the college he suffered almost continually from nervous debility, and at one time complained of defective eyesight. Nevertheless he completed his course the following year, 1874, with honors.

As he was still too young to be ordained, he was allowed to return home. During the few months of comparative leisure at Mallow he prepared himself for the reception of Holy Orders, meanwhile reviewing his studies. There were many things undoubtedly that had escaped him in the class-room. These now called for examination, analysis, and reflection under the genial direction of the local clergy with whom he was brought into new relationship.

It gave him a different and definite view of pastoral duties. As a mere looker-on, he could, while accompanying the pastor or curates on sick-calls or during their visits to the stations, compare the theory of the theologian with the practice of the missionary. He had leisure to observe the impressions made by different methods of pastoral ministration. Thus this period of his student life was more fruitful perhaps than any other. It caused him to realize how far the Seminary training in ideals ran short of the practical needs of parish life. He saw in a wholly new light many things which he had read of in his text-books or heard from the lecturer's chair; and it roused reflections touching the equipment of ecclesiastical students to which he gave expression later on. Among his unfinished manuscripts there is one on this subject in which he speaks very plainly of his sense of unpreparedness when confronted with the outside world after leaving the Seminary. His reflections touch upon the matter of both piety and intellectual training.

> The success of a Catholic collegiate institution, if it is to be measured by its adaptability to the end for which it is founded, consists in its implanting principles and habits of piety, which will be proof against the world's seductions; and principles of theology and philosophy, which will serve in the delicate and mysterious work of the salvation of souls.
>
> The principles of piety must be not only an armour of defence, but strong and keen weapons of zeal; and the principles of learning must not only serve in the pulpit and confessional, but be also the foundation of newer and higher studies which will always put the secular priest far in advance of his flock, even in worldly learning.[1]

Speaking of the Irish colleges in particular, he recognizes that the system which prevails in them, founded as it is on the teachings of the Fathers and the traditions of the Church, is probably the highest and most perfect that could be adapted to the spiritual wants of students.

[1] Manuscript on "Clerical Studies."

The seclusion from the world, the regularity of life, the strict apportioning of the student's time between prayer and study, the meditation on holy things, the example of superiors, and the absence of everything that could promote secular desires and worldly ambitions — all these form a catena around the lives of young Levites which keeps afar everything of evil.[1]

Nevertheless he believed that the prevalent system in use in the Seminary, the aim of which is to implant positive piety, suffers from a vital defect. That defect is, summarily expressed, the habitual appeal to the motive of fear, rather than to enthusiasm for great and noble achievement in the conquest of souls. There are placed before the candidate for the sacred ministry as incentives to fidelity which demand in him high qualifications, the dangers of missionary life, rather than the spirit of self-sacrifice and zeal for the Church of Christ.

Should the young student go forth on the mission without the high ideal always to be dreamed of and sought after, he will soon fall a victim to the worldliness, if not the vices that creep into the life of an easy and sensuous priest. The solvent influences of that secularism which has eaten its way into the Catholic priesthood as into less sacred professions, will speedily dissipate a fear that rests not on lofty principles. The spirit of the age will soon scatter to the winds a timidity that dreads danger to self rather than a diminution of God's glory. For there is a fear that is born of selfishness as well as a fear that springs from the dread possibility of being found unfaithful. The former will not survive the sharp test of time and experience. The latter, if it spring from enthusiasm and Divine affection, will not fail in the hour of trial.[2]

He discusses the conventional methods of daily meditation, spiritual reading, attendance at prescribed devotional exercises in a routine fashion, which produce no other effect on the average student in the Seminary than a conscious sense that he is fulfilling an obligation. What is of much greater importance in the training of the seminarist is that he should learn the tremendous significance of these things

[1] *Ibid.* [2] *Ibid.*

in their application to the care of souls. In like manner the student is drilled in the perfunctory performance of the ritual ceremonies, but, except during the annual retreats, his teachers hardly ever insist on the spirit, the wondrous power that flows from the proper use of these exercises. Hence as a priest he recites his Breviary in a mechanical way and without drawing either edification or wisdom from the sublime truths and maxims which he pronounces with his lips. His daily Mass is a mere performance, often hurried; his ministry of the sacramental rites becomes a sort of professional exercise without any spirit of personal devotion. Of course the student is told of the great value of these functions, but he is rarely trained to their appreciation by a deeply reverent practice such as will make him aware, while "going through" the ceremonies, that they have any devotional and spiritual fruit. The seminarist is taught silence as a discipline rather than as a principle the value of which is perennial. He is taught punctuality as a matter of rule, not as a vital element in priestly perfection. He wears the Roman collar and the ecclesiastical garb as a distinction that is apt to increase his self-esteem; but he is rarely reminded, unless he violates decorum, that this distinction is intended to bind him to a continuous consciousness of the obligation to cultivate perfection, whereby his conduct and piety shall be lifted above that of the faithful. Father Sheehan would have

> professors, deans, and especially confessors, insist upon those truisms of religion, which, alas, the young priest will be often tempted to deny or forget: that religion and religious truth are a dread reality; that we cannot serve God and mammon; that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must not be taken figuratively, nor applied with selection and discrimination; that the Divine Teacher meant what He said; and surely if any body of men should follow His counsels of perfection it should be His priests.[1]

He recognized a certain stereotyped use of language which leaves one at times under the impression that the student of theology has no practical grasp of certain prin-

[1] *Ibid.*

ciples, but satisfies himself with their theoretical acceptance in order to meet the obligation which they impose. He likewise instances certain forms of speech current among the clergy such as "respectable positions in the Church," "high and well-merited dignities," "right of promotion," etc. These phrases, like others, as "getting a better parish," "a poor living," indicate a worldly view of the apostolate that professes to glory in the humility and poverty of Christ.

> Only too soon will the young Levite learn to despise the self-effacement, the shy and retiring sensitiveness, the gentleness and humility that are such bright and beautiful ornaments of a real priestly character: and only too soon will he set his heart upon those vulgar and artificial preferments which the world prizes, but God and His angels loathe and laugh at. At least in the Garden of the Beloved, the sanctuary of the Lord, let such things not be even named. Let the only ambition of the student be to serve Christ, his only love that of His Master, his only decoration be his priestly dignity, his only reward that of the Beloved Disciple.[1]

With regard to the intellectual training imparted in ecclesiastical colleges, he adverts to its exclusiveness.

> The general verdict on our Irish Ecclesiastical Colleges is that they impart learning, but not culture — that they send out learned men, but men devoid of the graces, the "sweetness and light" of modern civilization. — It may be questioned whether, in view of their mission and calling, this is not for the best.[2]

Nevertheless, advancing civilization makes certain demands on our growing population and calls for adjustments in whatever is seen to possess a refining influence on life. Of this culture the priest must take account in the interests of the Christian religion and the Church of which he is a representative. Father Sheehan is careful to define for us the meaning of the culture which he advocates in the training of the seminarist. Culture literally means "tillage of the soil, the artificial improvement of qualities supplied

[1] *Ibid.* [2] *Ibid.*

by nature." He quotes John Addington Symonds in corroboration of his view that true

culture is the raising of previously educated intellectual faculties to their highest potency by the conscious effort of their possessors. Therefore it presupposes learning; and it means in a certain sense moral as well as intellectual training. Thus when the character is formed each mental force, whether it belongs to the contemplative or to the active order, each self, so cultivated, will possess the privilege insisted on by the poet of being able to "live resolvedly in the whole, the good, the beautiful" — not in the warped, the falsified, the egotistical; not in the petty, the adulterated, the partial; not in the school, the clique, the coterie; but in the large sphere of universal and enduring ideas.[1]

He holds that the theological seminary furnishes the first condition of culture; that is, learning such as is requisite for the missionary work of a priest.

Our Irish Colleges, if they do not teach philosophy and theology as at Rome; scriptural exegesis as at St. Sulpice; rubrics and ceremonies as at the English seminaries; and elocution as it is taught in America; yet they turn out the best equipped students in the world for the exigencies of modern missionary life. The fact that a priest studied at Maynooth was formerly equivalent to his possession of a degree. And to-day, in spite of adverse criticisms, I make bold to say, that the staff of professors at Maynooth . . . gives promise to maintain all the traditions that belong to the teaching staff of the greatest ecclesiastical Seminary in the world.[2]

But this recognition does not blind him to the fact that frequently the teaching, especially of Philosophy, is perfunctory.

It may be quite right to regard Philosophy as the key to Theology, or rather the vestibule to the temple of the queen of sciences, and to make it therefore the initial science into which the alumnus is inducted. But considering its importance, its intricacy, and its singular involutions of phrases and ideas, we should be disposed to teach its rudiments as preparatory to Theology, and its

[1] *Ibid.* [2] *Ibid.*

deeper and more difficult problems as subsequent and supplementary. For the importance of Philosophy is derived from the twofold fact, that it is the basis of all intellectual conclusions on the great problems of religion and faith, and that it occupies a place in contemporary thought from which Theology is summarily and almost contemptuously excluded. This cannot be doubted by any one who has the most superficial acquaintance with modern literature.[1]

It is important therefore to remember that the popular viewpoint which excludes Theology from the domain of the sciences does not on that account lessen the modern non-Catholic's interest in Philosophy. The thinking man of the world still regards it as the medium for the solution of the moral or religious problems which at all times confront us. He may feel a natural aversion to the dogmatic attitude with which the Catholic Church approaches such problems; but he also recognizes the fact that there is a dogmatism of infidelity, much less reasonable, which materialism has found to be a convenient pretext for denying the true sources of all being.[2]

These facts, continues Father Sheehan, make us realize that the priest of to-day has some definite use for his Philosophy. It is supposed to answer all such difficulties as are conjured up by the skeptic and agnostic mind. If a cleric intends to show his contempt for the speciousness of the various theories advanced to support the objections against Catholic truth, that contempt must be "based, not on ignorance of their elemental theories, but on a

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Father Sheehan notes among other characteristics of the modern college curriculum the prominence it assigns to the teaching of Philosophy. There were at the time at the University of Harvard in the United States more than seventy students taking advanced courses in the study of Philosophy. "Many of them," says an American writer, G. H. Palmer, whom he quotes, "intend to devote their lives to the subject. I asked twenty or thirty of them why they had turned to philosophy. Nearly half answered that they hoped for light on religious perplexity. Others had met some difficulty in mathematics, physics, literary criticism, or the care of the poor, which, if followed up, became a philosophical problem." This condition was not peculiar to New England. It existed wherever intellectual education had had some influence and opportunity of expansion.

complete acquaintance with them. We need to have all the scorn of a superior knowledge, a superior philosophy, together with faith that soars above systems."

Elsewhere Father Sheehan adverts to the fact that the study of Catholic Philosophy leads to a spiritual idealism, of great value in the priestly life. This is a feature on which professors rarely insist during the Seminary course.

> If we could inspire students and priests with a desire for pursuing these elevating studies, we would also encourage them by saying that there is no necessity of limiting themselves to the dry and rather deterrent scholastic system of question, answer and objection . . . In the pages of Catholic philosophers and apologists the great principles and truth of Catholic metaphysics have been presented in a form not more secure by its consistency and fidelity than attractive by its eloquence. This is especially true of the French school. Bossuet and Fénélon in more remote times, Lacordaire, Gratry, Montalembert, Ozanam, Mairie de Biran in our own, have lent to Catholic Philosophy a distinct charm, which has been by too many supposed to be the exclusive privilege of heresy. Balmez in Spain, Newman in England, and Brownson in America, have clothed truth with elegance and style.[1]

Such were Father Sheehan's convictions long before he had attained that mature wisdom of life which kept him intellectually active in his pastoral retirement at Doneraile. They prove that his reading had not been without reflection, and that his study both in the Seminary and on the mission had been improved by observation in all matters of practical importance.

[1] Manuscript.

AT THE TIME OF HIS ORDINATION — 1875

IV

PRIESTHOOD

1875

PATRICK SHEEHAN'S career hitherto appears to have been one of comparative obscurity. Certainly it was a period of disillusionment, broken by spells of illness and the sorrow that came with the death of those whom he loved best. It is difficult to say which of these experiences affected him most. "The worst of our own sufferings in life," he says in *Sunetoi*, "is disillusion. All along through the upward pathway of life we are dropping fancy after fancy, until in middle age we stand bare of every beautiful idea that helped us to soar above the banalities of existence, and bear our crosses at least with equanimity." He had not enjoyed the full benefit of that "real academy of life" which a boy finds in the domestic circle, nor had he formed any notable new friendships at college that would be a present solace to him.

There was indeed one who still took the place of parent in his regard, and whose beneficent influence on the formation of his character was to be of permanent value in his future career. The spiritual guidance, the encouragement and protection of Father McCarthy, had never failed him during all these years of his adolescence; and the association had had an ennobling effect on the young cleric.

While the student from Maynooth was getting a special course in pastoral theology under the tutorship of his guardian at Mallow, the latter was unexpectedly informed of his appointment as Bishop of Cloyne. The consecration took place in October, 1874; and Bishop McCarthy repaired to Queenstown, which city had, since the restoration, become the episcopal residence.

In the spring of the following year Patrick Sheehan received a letter from the Bishop bidding him go to the Vincentian Monastery at Sunday's Well (Tobar-an-domhnaigh), Cork, where he was to make his retreat preparatory to being ordained on April 18th. The ceremony was to take place in St. Mary's Cathedral, Cork, as the incomplete state of the Queenstown cathedral [1] made any such function there impossible. That our young candidate stood well in the estimation of his superiors at Maynooth is attested by the following note from the President, Dr. Charles Russell, to Bishop McCarthy.

ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE, MAYNOOTH, *April 7th, 1875.*

MY DEAR LORD:

I have much pleasure in reporting to your Lordship that at the close of last year Mr. Patrick Sheehan was, unanimously and without hesitation, recommended by our council for the Holy Order of Priesthood.

We felt the fullest confidence that he would prove a pious and exemplary priest.

Understanding that your Lordship proposes to advance Mr. Sheehan to Order I am very happy to give you this assurance as to our judgment regarding him while under our care.

Begging your Lordship's blessing,

I have the honour to be,

Your most obdt. servant.

C. W. RUSSELL.

In a brief note of a later date we find a record of the ordination: "Ordained in Cork, feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, 1875." That day was the third Sunday after Easter, April 18th. The ceremony was performed by Bishop Delany, the Ordinary of Cork, whose official attestation follows:

Hisce praesentibus fidem facimus nos, pontificalia exercentes, inter Missarum solemnia die 18vo Aprilis quae Dominica fuit, Rvd'o Dm'o Patritio Sheehan, Cloynensi, a proprio Episcopo

[1] Begun under the direction of the English architect, Welby A. Pugin, by Bishop McCarthy's predecessor, Dr. Keane.

rite dimisso, ordinem presbyteratus contulisse in nostra ecclesia pro-cathedrali.

(*sigill.*) GUILLELMUS DELANY
Epus Corcagiensis

Datum Corcagiae
die 28 aprilis 1875
Joannes Galvin *Sec.*

There is no other account of the solemn occasion. In a diary of that time Father Sheehan mentions the fact that after the ordination he returned to the Vincentian Monastery to prepare for his first Mass. Of this latter function, too, apparently no record remains, though we can hardly imagine that the event failed to arouse the devout enthusiasm of the Mallow people among whom the young cleric had grown up. He gives a description in *Luke Delmege* of a first Mass in the little village of Lislanee, and it is not unlikely that the scene is reminiscent of his own happy espousals as a priest. There is no reference among the local records to a celebration in the parish church. This and some indications preserved in the Mallow convent of the Sisters of Mercy lead to the assumption that the newly ordained priest said his first Mass in their chapel. It was the community in which his two sisters had labored and died.

APPOINTED TO THE ENGLISH MISSION

Like Luke Delmege, Father Sheehan was destined for the English mission. Vocations to the priesthood were at the time more frequent in Ireland than were required for ministrations to her faithful people. Other English-speaking countries, on the contrary, felt the dearth of laborers in the vineyard of Christ. Hence it was that the Isle of Saints was still able, as of old, to send missionaries abroad to safeguard the faith of her children in exile. The Bishop of Plymouth, Dr. William Vaughan, had asked for pastoral aid from the Cloyne diocese, and Father Sheehan received his appointment to England.

At first he was disturbed at the idea of being sent away from his native home; but soon he found his new field of

work congenial. He had gone out of the Seminary with an earnest purpose to do his best. What that best was we glean from some verses, a manuscript copy of which was found after his death in an old breviary used by him. The refrain is the present motto used at Stonyhurst College.[1]

The years of my life before me lie —
What shall my record be?
Known or unknown? God knows, not I;
Mine to do — "*Quant Je Puis.*"

God, Creator, my service claims —
What shall my service be?
Aim of my life, above all aims,
To work for Him — "*Quant Je Puis.*"

Christ, Redeemer, hath bought me sure,
His must I ever be.
My heart's desire, while life shall endure,
To render Him — "*Quant Je Puis.*"

Mary, Mother, thy servant I,
By self oblation, free,
A slave indeed, were I not to try
To do for her — "*Quant Je Puis.*"

Faith of our Fathers, living still,
Spite of block and gallows tree,
Mine not to rest at ease until
I have wrought for Him — "*Quant Je Puis.*"

Gospel tidings to tribes unknown,
That dwell beyond the sea,
Shall I not make their cause my own?
Mine to give — "*Quant Je Puis.*"

[1] This motto, *Quant Je Puis*, is originally that of the Shireburn family and was taken over by Stonyhurst College, when, in 1794, Thomas Weld of Lulworth, heir to the Shireburns of Stonyhurst, gave Stonyhurst Hall to the dispersed College of St. Omer (Artois), founded by Robert Persons in 1592.

Poor of Christ, for help they cry,
Hark to their piteous plea,
For Christ's dear sake then shall not I
Do for them — "*Quant Je Puis.*"

Children reft of their birthright,
Their souls in jeopardy —
Who shall come to their rescue if not I?
Mine to aid — "*Quant Je Puis.*"

God, Christ, Mary, children, poor,
Heathen beyond the sea,
My heart's desire while life shall endure
To do for them — "*Quant Je Puis.*"

For a few months the young Irish priest was kept at the cathedral, in Plymouth, possibly to test his ability and disposition for pastoral work amid conditions quite strange to him. No doubt the old seaport town reminded him in some of its features of his native coast, for the bold rocky ridges of Plymouth Hoe stretching out into the harbor have in them suggestions of the romantic charms that cling to the shores of the Sister Island. But Plymouth did not permit him those protracted and solitary communings with nature which he had enjoyed during his walks in his student days along the rugged coast of Clare. He found abundant labor for souls, and frequently of an unpoetic character, waiting him on every side. Fortunately there were protecting and guiding influences round him. The Bishop was a man of wide experience, having ruled over his episcopal flock for upward of twenty years. Canon Herbert Woollett, the rector of the Cathedral, was a kindly priest of broad judgment and solid piety; and altogether the surroundings proved helpful to the young levite from Ireland. There is a tradition that Bishop Vaughan used to take a humorous delight at table in disputing Ireland's political claims. This was calculated to rouse the curate from Cloyne. The Vicar General had frequently to intervene in order to save the young Irishman's feelings. On

one occasion the Bishop referred to certain "Irish atrocities," when Canon Graham, one of the clerical members of the Bishop's household, good-naturedly came to Father Sheehan's relief by reading aloud from the morning paper a flagrant case of British wife-beating, which turned the conversation to English atrocities.

It fell to Father Sheehan's lot to open the course of sermons at the Cathedral in honor of Our Lady, on the first Sunday in May. His theme was the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a subject according to his heart, and one to which he appears to have done justice. Indeed the gift which made him an exceptionally impressive preacher in later years showed itself very early in his priestly career. At first, it appears, he was led to introduce into his preaching a certain form of controversy, which he believed to be adapted to the English mind. He gives us a casual glimpse of this in *Luke Delmege*.

Luke preached his first sermon very much to his own satisfaction. He had heard ever so many times that what was required in England was a series of controversial and argumentative sermons that might be convincing rather than stimulating. Then one day he read in a Church newspaper that a certain Anglican divine had declared that Calvinism was the bane and curse of the Church of England. Here then was the enemy to be exorcised by a course of vigorous lectures on Grace. Here Luke was master. The subject had formed part of the fourth year's curriculum in college and Luke had explored it to its deepest depth. He read up his "Notes," drafted fifteen pages of a discourse, committed it to memory, and delivered it faultlessly, with just a delicious flavor of Southern brogue, which was captivating to the greater part of his audience, and delightful from its very quaintness and originality to the lesser and more select. Now Luke was a Molinist and he told his congregation so. He demolished Calvin and Knox first, and when he had stowed away all that was left of them, he told his wondering and admiring audience that the Thomist and Scotist positions had been carried by assault, and that the Molinist flag was now waving above the conquered garrisons. Many more things he told them as their wonder grew; and when Luke stepped down from the pulpit,

he felt that the conversion of England had now in reality begun.

The opinion of the congregation varied. That very large section in every congregation to whom the delivery of a sermon is a gymnastic exercise, which has no reference to the audience other than as spectators, considered that it was unique, original, but pedantic. One or two young ladies declared that he had lovely eyes, and that when he got over the brusquerie of his Irish education, he would be positively charming. One old apple-woman challenged another:

"What was it all about, Mary?"

"Yerra how could I know? Shure it was all Latin. But I caught 'the grace of God' sometimes."

"Well, the grace of God and a big loaf — shure that's all we want in this world."

A rough man, in his factory dress, asked: —

"Who is this young man?"

"A new hand they have taken on at the works here," said his mate.

The opinions of the clergy were not audibly expressed. Luke indeed heard one young man hint broadly at the "windmill," by which he understood his own gestures were meant. And another said something about a pumphandle. A young Irish confrere stole to Luke's room late that night and on being bidden to "come in" he threw his arms around Luke, thumped him on the back, ran up and down the room several times, and went through sundry Celtic gyrations, — then:

"Luke, old man, I'll tell you, you've knocked them all into a cocked hat."

The Vicar General said nothing for a few days; then:

"Delmege, have you got any more of these sermons?"

"Yes, sir; I have the series in 'Notes.'"

"Burn them. — Take the *Dublin Review* to your room, volume by volume," he added, "and study it. You have got quite on the wrong tack." [1]

If such was Father Sheehan's early experience, he quickly mended his methods, for we learn that his sermons in the Plymouth cathedral were much liked. The local papers pointedly mention a somewhat remarkable incident in

[1] *Luke Delmege*, Chap. IX, "The Realms of Dis."

connection with his preaching. Among the notables resident in the city at that time was the Rev. Robert Stephen Hawker, former Vicar of Morwenstow, well known in the world of letters, the writer of several volumes of poems and of some favorite hymns for Anglican church service.[1] He had retired from his living owing to impaired health, and was staying for rest in his native town of Plymouth. Whether it was that the restorations then going on at the Episcopalian church [2] prevented him from attending his own denominational service, or whether some more positive motive was the cause, it so happened that the Protestant divine, together with his wife and three daughters, was present in the Catholic cathedral one Sunday evening when the young Irish curate preached on the "Sanctity of the Church." A few days later the minister, having succumbed to a severe attack of heart disease, called for the Catholic priest, and on his deathbed made his profession of faith. The newspapers promptly connected the conversion of the Anglican clergyman with his attendance at the cathedral the previous Sunday, and for a time the eloquence of the young preacher became the subject of comment in the town.

To this period must be referred also the first records of his experience in attending the sick and dying. The Naval Hospital was at Stonehouse,[3] near the outlet of the Tamar to the sea. The marines at this institution were cared for apparently in the perfunctory way of government establishments at a time when infirmaries, like the South Devon Hospital, with its sanitary accommodations and staff of trained nurses, had not yet been built.

The dying man lay in a little cot at the right hand side of the long empty ward. There was no other patient there. An attendant in brown cloth decorated with brass buttons, sat on the bed, coolly reading a newspaper. The hand of death was on the

[1] The author of the popular poem, "And shall Trelawney die?"

[2] St. Andrew's, a fine specimen of the fifteenth-century perpendicular style of architecture, was being renovated under the direction of Sir Gilbert Scott.

[3] In *Luke Delmege*, Chap. IX, he locates the incidents at a place called Stokeport.

face of the poor consumptive. His eyes were glazed, and the gray shadow flitted up and down at each convulsive breath.

"Is this the Catholic patient?" asked Luke anxiously.

"Yaas, he be a Cawtholic, I understan'," said the man.

"He is dying," said Luke who had never seen death before.

"Dead in hexactly twanty minutes," said the man, taking out his watch and measuring the time. He restored the watch to his pocket and continued reading the paper.

This awful indifference smote Luke to the heart. He knelt down, put his stole around his neck, tried to elicit an act indicative of conscious sorrow from the dying, failed, gave conditional absolution, administered Extreme Unction, and read the prayers for the dying. The attendant continued absorbed in his paper. Then Luke sat down by the bedside, watched the flitting changes on the face of the dying whilst murmuring a prayer. Exactly at the twenty minutes specified the man rose up, folded his paper, stretched himself and looked. A last spasm flashed across the gray, ashen face of the dying; the breathing stopped, fluttered, stopped again, came slowly and with painful effort, stopped again, then a long, deep breath, the eyes turned in their sockets. That soul had fled. A mucous foam instantly gathered on the blue lips and filled the entire mouth.

"Did I tell 'ee? Twanty minutes to the second," said the man as we wiped the foam from the dead man's lips and lifted the coverlet, flinging it lightly over the face of the dead man. [1]

It was his first lesson, not only in meeting the icy presence of death among the derelicts of a crowded industrial center, but of what at a later period Canon Sheehan regarded as the characteristic trait of the English people, their "individualism," a disposition which one meets in all strata of British life, and according to which each man goes his own way, unheeding and indifferent — "a solitary in the awful desert of teeming human life."

At the close of the summer vacation Father Sheehan was appointed curate to the church of the Sacred Heart at Exeter, better known as "St. Nicholas Priory." The pastor of the church was the Very Rev. George Hobson, later Provost of Plymouth, a saintly and learned priest,

[1] *Ibid.* p. 113.

who on account of poor health had arranged for a temporary leave of absence. After the young priest had been inaugurated in the details of his duties he was left as administrator in sole charge of the parish.

The work, though not arduous, was sufficiently continuous to engage all his time and energy. His solicitude for the sick, his assiduity in catechizing and preaching, and above all his care for the children of the school attached to the priory, for which work he developed later on a singular predilection, are remembered to this day by the people of Exeter. One of his successors, who went to the parish as curate in 1912, tells us that "there is still a little group of old people who remember Father Sheehan quite well." The latter seems to have made pretty much the same impression upon all, namely that he was a man of more than ordinary piety; that he was wonderfully observant, no detail being too small to escape his notice. "He was also generally recognized to have been, even in these early days, a splendid preacher, the chief characteristics of his sermons being directness and brevity. He appears to have had the happy knack of seizing upon some particular thought of religious duty. When he had exhibited it and presented it clearly to his audience, he made his bow and retired. They remembered in particular his first sermon. It was on charity; very short, hardly five minutes, it would seem. Yet close on forty years afterward its general outline was almost verbally reproduced by an unlettered woman of eighty-eight, who had heard him deliver it." While the Exeter people remembered him vividly, he was equally clear in his recollections of them. A few months before his death he wrote a letter to the local priest in answer to some inquiries made of him. The accuracy of his recollections was astonishing. "He seemed to be able to give the very dimensions of the houses where he used to visit. He could sketch with marvelous fidelity to detail the little peculiarities and eccentricities of people, and forecast the characteristic traits of individuals, at that time mere boys and girls, who were now dignified

fathers and stately matrons. And he did this with a humor that disarmed all suspicion of criticism." He expressed his sense of deep indebtedness to those who obliged him to spend his years of priestly apprenticeship in England. "During my curacy at Exeter," he wrote, "I learned more theology than I acquired during my whole college career, and I gained more of practical experience than I have had since then, during all the long years of my ministry."

He was happy by all accounts in his work, but the constant strain of his zealous activity began gradually to tell on his health. In July of 1876 he found himself obliged to take a brief vacation. He hoped that a visit to Lourdes would bring him fresh strength at the feet of Our Blessed Lady. It would be medicine alike for soul and body.

We have his diary of that time. Although the journey occupied little more than the two weeks of the customary summer vacation allowed to missionary priests in England, it gives a glimpse of his habit of observing men and things, and in some sense contains the beginnings of his first book. Here are some of the details: — He leaves Exeter on Monday, July 10th. At Southhampton he takes the boat and gets into conversation with "curious old gentleman from Manchester, dealer in hides." The steward "is very decent," and so forth. Except for a little touch of *mal de mer* he gets to Havre without incident. There he tries his academical French on the first man he meets, but is not very well understood, and understands "the patois" still less. At Paris he asks for the *Hotel d'Angleterre*, but lands in the "English Hotel." He looks for the Abbé Choliac, to whom he had, it appears, an introduction, but after sundry failures is made to understand that the Abbé is *en vacances*. Then he takes refuge with the Passionist Fathers, who speak English. He finds the Paris cab drivers slow, or else he is in too great a hurry to get to the train for fear of missing it. — *Plus vite, plus vite, vous êtes très tard.* — He gives the driver two francs for having whipped up his horse, and finds that he has missed his train

after all. A French priest whom he accosts with *Je suis un prêtre Catholique étranger* answers somewhat uncivilly: *Et moi, je suis un prêtre Catholique*, and the Irish curate looks significantly at his companion, who proves to be an English priest "in mufti." The young pilgrim admires Pau, which he thinks is like Torquay. He is enchanted with the beauty of the Pyrenees and of Lourdes. At the sight of the grotto he exclaims: *Mère de Dieu, comme je vous aime, et votre Fils!*

In Lourdes he meets with the usual experiences of the priest pilgrim. He is delighted by the piety of the people; but there are a few shadows. One day a priest serves his Mass, and he is edified. The next day a boy serves, and we read in the notes: "How I would wring the young fellow's ears if I had him in Exeter!" He records what people eat, as well as his own modest fare. "Returned and breakfasted on coffee and omelette. French priest breakfasting on salmon and claret." There are quite a number of soggarths from Ireland, some of whom he knows distantly, but they are all older than he. He gets into conversation with a few of them, and they discuss the defects of the Church in Ireland — the lack of piety, the deficiencies of Maynooth education, the characteristics of some of the bishops (Bishop Croke gets a great eulogy), the need of Irish publications. Preaching in Ireland and England is compared, with due reference to the French eloquence they had heard at the grotto. Someone tells the story of a French bishop who invariably "promised his curates a bottle of wine if they succeeded in preaching only fifteen minutes." Finally they all discuss sundry bottles of Bordeaux in one of the older priest's rooms.

But the things that remained in Father Sheehan's memory longest were certain details he heard about former Maynooth students, some of them his own classmates, of whom he had lost sight for a time while in England. One of them had been expelled and gone to America. Another whom he had known long ago had been kept back from ordination at the very end of his course. He had been

"first of first" in the logic year and then he had done nothing until he took second premium in fourth year divinity. He was married now, badly circumstanced, etc. — Such is the account of his momentary impressions and experiences, of which he weaves occasional strands into his books later on.

The visit to Lourdes seems to have improved his physical condition. His mental impressions of what he saw and heard were a mixture of good and evil. He found much piety and a deep faith, such as he had hardly expected outside Ireland. But then, too, he met the old disappointments where he had looked for consistency. Thus at the bookstands in Lourdes he discovered that, alongside the devotional books and guides which the pilgrims were expected to purchase, by far the largest number of works on sale were those of Dumas and Georges Sand. What the older priests had said about piety in Ireland and in France was not what he should have liked to think. An American from Chicago, who had been cured at Lourdes, two years before, of a serious disease, and who had returned to give thanks to Our Blessed Lady, spoke of France as a place of great iniquity. The American was a publican himself, but he declared that he had found Paris a "hell on earth." What Father Sheehan had heard about some of his class fellows at Maynooth likewise made him sad. On the other hand he had found much good. He felt satisfied that he had profited. "Man to be wise must study the vices and virtues of which human nature is capable, first in himself, and then in all good faith in others." He was sure that he had a right standard to judge by and compare things as to their real value. "The model of all human and Divine perfection was the God-man who stood on Judean soil 1900 years ago, and left His life and His utterances as the highest standard to which the world could attain. By that Life all mental and moral perfection must be judged. It is the criterion of all that is holy and sacred. It is the touchstone of all sterling and unalloyed greatness."

On his way back from Lourdes he stops at Paris. There

he meets some friends, says Mass at the Convent of the "Poor Servants of the Mother of God," who have houses also in Dublin and Cork. He has a fainting spell while making his thanksgiving. Afterward he visits the Senate chamber where he sees the great Mgr. Dupanloup. The principal incident is his visit to the Irish College in the *Rue des Irlandais*, of which the Vincentian Father Thomas McNamara was then rector. Father Thomas Murphy, the administrator, receives him very kindly and conducts him, in company with Fathers Casy and Power, through the college, giving some interesting accounts of the old "Lombard Foundation" and of the remarkable men who had studied in the college during the past two centuries. Among them were three Bishops of Cloyne — McKenna, Coppinger, and Keane.[1] Father Murphy could tell him much about the subject, for he had made special studies in the old archives, and had written a sketch of the institution some years before for the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (1866). On his way to his hotel Father Sheehan buys a French book, *Le Génie du Catholicisme*, for a franc, probably because it reminded him of Chateaubriand's work. He also invests two pounds in a new cassock. Next day at noon he takes the train for Havre, where he arrives in time to book on the *Alice* for Southampton. He reaches dock at six-thirty in the morning, and arrives at Exeter in the evening.

The following autumn and winter until February Father Sheehan remained at the "Priory." It is not clear that he did any writing here, but he appears to have received some impulses in this direction from the Canon, while the latter was still residing there, if not from the traditions of the place itself. "Priest Hobson" was much respected in Exeter, not merely for his gentle urbanity but also for his charity to the poor of the town irrespective of creed or nationality. He had studied at Clifton and Ushaw, had traveled considerably, was a man of wide reading. His reputation was perhaps enhanced also by the glamor of learning that at-

[1] The Irish College in Paris from 1578 to 1901. By Rev. Patrick Boyle, C.M., 1901. Document XIV.

tached to one of his predecessors, Dr. Oliver. The latter was a noted antiquarian, who had been in charge of the parish of St. Nicholas Priory (an old Jesuit mission) for forty-four years, had written a history of Exeter and of the ecclesiastical antiquities of the district (Devon), and had established a name for solid scholarship. From him the old aristocratic society of the town, distinguished by its quiet air of prosperity, had learned to respect the Catholic priesthood; for he had forced upon their remembrance the fact that the glories of the old St. Peter's Cathedral with its wonderful choir screens, misereres, reredos, minstrel gallery, even to its cinquecento front, were still asserting their ancient Roman Catholic proprietorship, despite the present guardianship which the Church of England exercised over the edifice.

For Father Sheehan, whose mind was just opening to the new impressions from the surroundings in which he found himself, these things had a great attraction. His position as representing Canon Hobson during the latter's absence had naturally drawn him into circles that had a refining as well as an enlightening and informing influence on his receptive mind. He tells us in *Luke Delmege* what his estimate of this influence was:

> Here invariably once a week, sometimes twice or thrice a week, Luke had the inestimable privilege of meeting a small, select coterie of esoterics, representative of every branch of literature, science and art, and even divinity. For here came many soft-mannered, polite, well-read Anglican clergymen, who stepped over from their snug, if dingy, houses in the Cathedral close, and brought with them an atmosphere of learning and refinement and gentle courtesy, which had a perceptible effect on the character and manner of this young Hibernian. And here, mostly on Wednesday evenings, were gathered celebrities who slipped down from London by an afternoon train and went back at midnight. Luke began to learn that there were in the world a few who might be masters and teachers forever to a "First of First," and he grew humble . . . and his quarter's salary was spent long before he had received it in buying books, the very names of which he had never heard before. And with his plastic Irish nature he had begun to fit in and adapt himself to these new environments.

In this way the susceptible Irish curate learned many things of which he had not dreamed amid his wildest ambitions in college. His opinion of Englishmen, their worth and their character, began to alter gradually. And here we trace the beginnings of that remarkable characteristic in his writings,—the tendency to compare the two races, the Irish and the English. He knew that in his present position he could learn much by observation, as one necessarily does who travels with an open mind. As for the English clergy, his idea at this time seems to have been that they were mostly converts; that whilst they had a deep respect for the apostolic succession, a detailed knowledge of rubrics, especially where ecclesiastical vestments and candles were concerned, they were deficient in the knowledge of the essentials of religion. As for himself he remembered the important fact that he had sat under O'Kane — the O'Kane "on the Rubrics" — and had been obliged to pore over "Murray on the Church," of which the Anglican divines of course knew nothing; nor had they taken draughts of special learning from Crolly, "the tub of theology," not to speak of the scholastic sips that had refreshed his class hours. Here he was, then, ready to enlighten others, with just, perhaps, the faintest misgiving that he might be overestimating his superiority.

The three men who had thus far directed him by kindly advice, given chiefly in an *obiter* manner, but with a decided intonation, such as had left its mark on his memory, were all men of considerable experience — Canons. One of them had impressed upon him the necessity of being "respectable" and the importance of observing episcopal statutes. We get a glimpse of this in Father Sheehan's description of the newly ordained priest who had called on his pastor for the purpose of asking leave to say his first Mass under the paternal roof: "Impossible, quite impossible, I assure you, my — ah — dear Mr. Delmege. There is an episcopal regulation forbidding it, but we must not discuss the subject." Then, on the young priest's rising to go, the Canon had left this piece of advice with him:

"You are very young . . . If you continue your studies, as every young student should, and try to acquire ease and proper deportment of manner, and if your life is otherwise — ah, correct and respectable, you may in the course of years attain to the honors and — emoluments of the ministry. You may even in your old age — that is, supposing an irreproachable and respectable career — you may even attain to — ah, the dignity of being incorporated into the — ah, Chapter of your native diocese." That was to be the goal toward which he should aim if he would be successful in his own country — dear, old Ireland. He should aim at being "respectable."

But now he was in England. At Plymouth he had met another Canon, a kindly man who had told him to burn his "notes" if they caused him to preach such sermons as the one he delivered in the Cathedral shortly after his arrival. Then he had acted as master of ceremonies and, in helping the Bishop to vest, had found himself deranging the episcopal *cappa magna*, that mysteriously complicated garment which someone styles the "most beautiful of all the beautiful vestments with which Mother Church adorns her children." [1] By that lapse he had discredited "O'Kane on the Rubrics"; and it left him with a feeling of guilt, but also of resentment. When, a few weeks later, he received the order removing him from the Cathedral he had a suspicion that the English people, clergy, Bishop and all, were "conceited and formal as well as individualistic." He felt that he had been disappointed even in the best of them.

And next he had come to Exeter. It was a place much less noisy than Plymouth. There were no mounted cannon on ramparts, no ill-smelling quarters where drunken soldiers or sailors might be seen carousing, no excited fishwomen discoursing in the market-place, no idle boatmen lounging at the corners. He missed the smoke of ship funnel and factory which had darkened the noonday at the seacoast. Here all was quiet and dignified and lightsome. But under it he recognized the typical smooth English mechanism,

[1] *Luke Delmege*, Chap. XV, "Aylesburgh."

the same regularity and relentless pressure, even in this sleepy "cathedral town" with its manifold medieval traditions carved in the solid stone, for a perpetual remembrance.

If he gained culture, he learned other things too. While he took his pace from the measured movements round him, a sudden jar would occasionally rouse his sensitive nerves with an uncomfortable twang. The rhythmic voice of the Canon would remind him that there was something amiss; that time and order were different things in England and Ireland. "Quick, quick, Father Sheehan, you are two minutes late this morning. These people won't wait, you know." He felt that his pastor was right; but he could not help thinking, "God be with old Ireland, where the neighbors meet leisurely for a *seanachus* on Sunday morning, and sit on the tombstones, and talk of old times. And no one minds the priest being half an hour late. Nor does he; for he salutes them all affably as he passes into the sacristy, and they say, 'God bless your Reverence.'" Or again the faultless little pastor would exclaim: "Look here, look here, Father, now look at that corporal. There you have not observed the folds and it must all be made up again"; or, "Could you manage to modulate your voice a little? This is not the cathedral, and some of those ladies are nervous. I saw Mrs. S—— start and look pained while you were preaching yesterday. It was like an electric shock."

"God be with old Ireland," thought our young curate, "where the people's nerves are all right, and where they measure your preaching powers by the volume of sound you can emit."

There were similar encounters in the field of theology, not merely pastoral but higher dogma, from which the youthful Irish champion came forth chastened and humbled; and more so when, quite accidentally, he discovered that the gentle Canon, his pastor, was "actually the author of certain remarkable philosophical papers in the *Dublin Review*, and that his opinions" (which Luke had tried to

controvert on the authority of his "notes") "were quoted in the leading Continental Reviews."

Thus, whilst he found himself gradually modifying his opinions of things, did he compare the impressions which he received. He endeavored to select what was best for his own mental and moral improvement. He knew that everywhere God's children were working out the eternal destinies with the inherited instruments at their disposal. He began to realize that men were much like the plant creation round them. There were great differences of temper, based on climate, on local surroundings, and on the opportunities that each one received in the matter of light and culture. In some parts the sun of faith and education had been shining steadily for a long while, whereas in other parts it hardly penetrated the eternal shadows. Yet, as in the vegetable kingdom, so in the social world, all these varieties not only were of God's ordering, but they actually contributed to the improvement of each other and of the whole. All this Father Sheehan was beginning to see, and he labored hard to assimilate what he found excellent in his present surroundings.

Whatever his riper judgments did for him in subsequent years, he never ceased to regard his connection with the English mission as the most fruitful, if not the happiest, period of his life as a priest. He learned and unlearned many things, and the lessons remained indelibly fixed in his soul. Thus he demonstrated in his own career what he held to be a truism, namely that "it is only in middle life we begin to take a just view of human things."

Meanwhile the knowledge which he acquired gave him a sense of safety and a steady reliance on fundamental principles. There are, as he expresses it, "two certainties in the midst of the mysteries and doubts that beset our lives. One is the certainty of faith, that is, the teaching of a divinely appointed Church. The other is the certainty of action, that is, the duty nearest to hand. All speculations, doubts, surmises, and perplexities are solved by action — the performance of the duty that calls us for the moment."

For the rest, he was still, in some respects at least, an unpractical idealist. Thus he thought, as he said, that "the unnatural delay in the conversion of England was primarily due to certain narrow, conservative, and petty views which will never allow the appeal, successfully, to the broad human spirit of the age." He believed in the *Zeitgeist*, which he mistook for progress.

All in all he was quite happy because he had made up his mind to work. He remembered what he had put down in his notes at Maynooth, not from the professor of theology but from Carlyle's *Past and Present*, that "all work, even cotton spinning, is noble. Labor is life: from the inmost heart of the worker rises his God-given force, the sacred, celestial life-essence, breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart he awakens to all nobleness, to all knowledge, self-knowledge and much else, so soon as work fitly begins." "Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working." And again, "Hast thou valued patience, courage, perseverance, openness to light, readiness to own thyself mistaken, to do better next time? All these, all virtues, in wrestling with the dim brute powers of fact, in ordering of thy fellows in such wrestle, there, and elsewhere not at all, thou wilt continually learn."

This philosophy, for the time being, satisfied his aspirations. In his present surroundings he had everything that his intellect and taste could require. "He had leisure for thought in the intervals of almost unremitting work; or rather this ceaseless work supplied material for thought, which again interacted and created its own outcome in ceaseless work."

To understand how continually the Catholic clergyman's time was occupied in the little mission of Exeter, it is well to recall that Canon Hobson, and probably his predecessors, had found it prudent, if not absolutely necessary, to associate themselves with the various philanthropic and civic enterprises of the Exeter community. These were in the hands of numerous associations. There was a society

for the rescue of discharged prisoners, a society for the supression of public vice, a society for the housing of the poor, a society for the purification of the stage. Besides these, there were the confraternities of the parish, the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, literary societies, library committees, and so forth, in all of which organizations the priest was supposed to be interested for the benefit and instruction of his flock, as well as for the opportunities they gave him to defend and explain the Catholic faith to outsiders. Now in the absence, for a considerable time, of the regular pastor, these duties, or some of them at least, devolved upon the curate as the only representative of the Catholic clergy in the place. Indeed Canon Hobson was anxious that it should be so. He felt it to be a serious duty, though he might make it the subject of mild jest, as did Luke's old rector when he said: "I don't see your name, Father Delmege, on the committee for making statesmen truthful and introducing the Seventh Commandment on the stock exchange." There was plenty then to keep him busy during the hours available for work.

In the intervals Father Sheehan worked at his sermons and addresses. It was important that he should not disappoint the Vicar, nor the people who were looking to him for enlightenment and guidance. Though he took regular outings into the country, in order to preserve his health, which, he had been warned by repeated collapses, was not very robust, he generally remained at his desk some hours in the forenoon. He carefully prepared, by writing and committing faithfully to memory, what he had to say in public. On this practice he comments in *Luke Delmege:* "In after years he wondered at himself, but admitted that he dared not do otherwise. He never knew who might be listening to him in this strange land where every one is so interested in religion because every man is his own pope; and so uninterested, because he cares so little what all the other popes, even the Archbishop of Canterbury, may hold or teach." [1] At any rate the discipline was good for him.

[1] *Loc. cit.*

It gave him that facility in expression which became one of the most striking of his acquirements.

The net result of his activity was that a great number of persons habitually came to him for information on religious subjects. He instructed many who professed to become converts — not a few of them were received into the Church; but he admits that of his early converts only half the number remained faithful to their pledges as Catholics.

He also got into some controversies. On one occasion the editor of a local paper failed to print the young curate's elaborate protest against a public insult offered to "the Romish clergy" by a Protestant minister. When he found that his eloquent refutations from the Fathers and great theologians had gone into the editorial waste paper basket he was naturally indignant. "Fair play!" he makes Luke say, "British fair play! Pshaw, they are the greatest humbugs and hypocrites on the face of the earth. Here is an open attack, uncalled for, without pretense of reason or exciting cause. Here is a reply fair, temperate, judicious, and lo, it is suppressed! It is the old story; they talk of truth when they lie. They talk of religion when they blaspheme. They talk of humanity when they rob and plunder and kill." [1]

Sometimes in the midst of his zealous tirades he discovered that his rector took a different view of such matters, and he was gradually forced to realize that the old man, with his keen insight into human nature, his large-minded tolerance, his deep and devout faith, was right, and he with his Irish impetuosity was wrong. In truth the Anglo-Saxon character and temperament were a constant enigma to him. At one time it seemed to him that Englishmen, with their intellectual, moral, and social advantages, should be easily gathered into the fold of the true Church. They were quiet, straightforward, dignified; not at once emotional and apathetic, like his own countrymen. Ireland of

[1] *Luke Delmege*, Chap. XIII, "Racial Characteristics." See also Chap. XX, "Eclectic Catholicism," p. 255.

course had inherited the Faith, though her children, he thought, kept it without improving their opportunities; or perhaps they had no opportunities and were satisfied to let things go on in the old groove. But England, with its vitality, with its energies forever reaching out for and appealing in behalf of the higher things; with its genius for organizing, its benevolent supervision, its liberal philanthropy, its missionary associations, its systems of legislation radiating into every avenue of the commonwealth without trespassing on the liberty of the individual; — how was it that the claims of the Catholic Church, so absolutely irrefragable and invincible, could escape the thoughtful consideration of such a people and fail to attract them powerfully? It must be that something is wrong with the Catholic method.

At other times the pendulum would swing in the opposite direction. He would read in the morning paper a statement from a well-known London divine scoring the assumptions of the "Italian mission," its insolence in attempting to obtain a foothold in England in order to corrupt the truth, "which the Church of England had kept uncontaminated by superstition from the days of Augustine until now." The consistency and comprehensiveness of the Anglican Church were set forth, showing how, "despite papal abuses and Romish incursions," it had retained "its beautiful ritual in apostolic simplicity." Charges of this kind would stir the blood of the young Irish curate. Throwing down the paper, he would exclaim: "My God, what liars these Britishers are! They are the greatest hypocrites in the world. They are too contemptuous to stoop to lie in private life. They care too little about you to condescend to lie. But in politics, commerce, religion — whenever a point has to be gained, they will lie like Satan." The next day he would come across some example of heroic abnegation and sacrifice where he least expected it in a recent English convert; it would reverse all his former judgments about the English. The whole matter was puzzling to a man who looked for consistency, surely. As

he was an eager reader he became gradually familiar with new sources of information. Some of these in Catholic literature, of a distinctly apologetic nature, he mastered very carefully. His admiration for Mill and Heine and Emerson gave way in time to an appreciation of writers less pretentious perhaps but more solidly intellectual. And this, too, it would appear, he owed to the discreet and disciplining guidance of the old Canon. "'That is a valuable and interesting book,' the latter would say, pushing over a volume by some great Catholic author, to Luke; for he was a member of St. Anselm's Society, and this was one of the societies of which Luke was not a member. 'Take it to your room and read it at your leisure.'" The curate did not always, perhaps, promptly respond to these overtures to keep him on the right track. He had the notion that "all the poetry of the world is in the Catholic Church; and all the literature of the world outside of it." He would say, meaning the remark to be pregnant and suggestive, that he thought "the whole of our philosophy consists of junks of indigestible propositions, garnished with syllogisms of froth." These were momentary convictions which he disowned when in time he began to realize that, while books had been his professors for years, men were becoming his teachers now.

Another thing Father Sheehan learned at Exeter was to look personally to the honor of the Divine Tabernacle. Learned and cultured as was his parish priest, he did not disdain to attend to the little things that concerned the sanctuary. "Come," the older priest would say on a Sunday afternoon, "spare me a half hour and help me at the altar." He took a special pride in decorating the altar for Benediction on Sunday evenings and on other festive occasions. It was a labor of love. His assistant would often wonder. "I fear the wonder was slightly contemptuous. To see this excellent old man, Doctor of Divinity, Dublin Reviewer, correspondent with French and Italian philosophers, studiously arranging candles and flowers, was a something far beyond Luke's comprehension." It is pos-

sible that in after years when larger experiences had opened his eyes widely, he "dropped some bitter tears over the recollections of his manner at times toward the venerable pastor, when in reply to some invitation to help, the younger man had said: 'Impossible, sir, I really have something serious to do. Can't you let the ladies or the sacristan attend to these things?'"

Of course he did not neglect his own countrymen, and the poor in particular. There was, as there is still, a colony of Irish and Italian exiles in Exeter. Their disposition, so very different from the Englishman's, whose habits of thrift and cleanliness stand in marked contrast with the easy-going ways of the immigrants, sometimes caused friction, which Father Sheehan was called on to temper. To him the difference between the quiet, seemingly indifferent, and apathetic manner of the Britisher, and the picturesque and enthusiastic fervor of the Irish and of the Southern races, was a study. He sums up their controversies in a graphic manner thus: To his inquiry: —

"Who lives here?"

"A family of Hirish peddlers, sa, and a family of Hitalian horgan grinders. They are very huntidy, sa, in their 'abits."

"Thim English, yer reverence, they're haythens. They don't go to church, mass, or meeting. They think of nothing but what they eat and drink."[1]

He had some experiences, too, of which he makes record, in the local institutions, with the convicts in Dartmoor prison and the inmates of the Lunatic Asylum; likewise in some little out missions to which he was called from time to time as the needs of the neighborhood prompted.

The following episode, taken from the *Graves at Kilmorna*, is literally true and serves as an illustration of the kind of work which Father Sheehan did in the convict Prison at Dartmoor.

In the summer of 1876 a young Irish priest, lent to the Diocese of Plymouth, and just then officiating at Exeter, was ordered to

[1] *Luke Delmege*, Chap. XXI, "The Submerged Tenth."

proceed to Dartmoor and take up the Sunday duty of the prison chaplain "who was absent on leave." There was to be a service in the morning and another in the evening.

Father Sheehan describes his arrival at the place after a drive in the governor's trap from the Tavistock station. His servant at tea was a convict serving his last term. There was but little conversation, and that of a rather gruesome kind. Then the priest retired, though not before having written out the headings of the morning's discourse.

The next morning he was conducted to the Lodge, got a heavy bunch of keys from the porter, with strict injunctions that on no account was he to part with them even for a moment, shown how to lock and unlock the heavy iron gates by shooting the bolt twice each way, and again warned that the keys were not for a moment to leave his possession.

The chapel bell was pealing out its dismal notes, as he crossed two large yards and entered the prison precincts. Two convicts were just entering the chapel. They were his acolytes. The prisoners filed in . . . Then there was a pause, and the priest, feeling the heavy keys galling his leg, took them out and placed them on the table. He was instantly tapped on the shoulder by the warder who stood by. "You must not leave them off your person, sir, even for a moment." The priest shivered, and just then the heavy clank, clank of chains was heard; and at a quick pace twenty or more convicts, dressed in hideous yellow, were marched in. Each of these was fettered by long rods, ankle to wrist.[1]

Whilst the priest, robed in his vestments, was watching the line of prisoners as they filed past him, his attention was arrested by one, with a strong, albeit saddened, face, who was a cripple, lacking his right arm. Suddenly Father Sheehan recognized him. It was Michael Davitt, the political convict, whose history even at that period had thrilled every loyal Irishman's heart with pride in the young patriot's courage. For this was he who, when his people had been evicted from their home, had as a lad of ten sought

[1] *The Graves at Kilmorna*, Chap. XXVII, p. 186.

to earn the daily bread for the family, and in the effort had lost his arm. Later on, at the age of twenty-one, he had joined the Fenians. Within a few weeks he was tried, found guilty of felony, and condemned to penal servitude for fifteen years. Father Sheehan felt his sympathy go out to the youthful hero; but was told that he would not be permitted to speak to him alone. The prisoners might go to confession to their regular chaplain; but that would be at Easter. The Mass began, and what Father Sheehan saw before him froze him, as he says, with terror.

The prisoners occupied long forms, and at the end of every two of these, seated on a raised stool, back to the altar and facing the prisoners, was a warder, his right hand on his right knee, holding a revolver. It was horrible in God's own house and in the presence of the Prince of Peace.

He got through the Mass as well as he could, preached his little homily[1] from the pulpit of Portland stone — which had been made by the Fenian prisoners — and escaped to the sacristy, carrying with him the doleful image of that scene, and yet "with such music ringing in his ears as he had never heard before." A letter from the prisoner explains this reference to the music.

Sunday morning is verily a Sabbath to me. The Mass with all its tender associations, the sermon . . . but above all the music send me on the wings of imagination half way towards heaven . . . at Benediction all the prisoners, myself among the number, join in singing the "O Salutaris" and the Litany. There I invariably break down. To hear three hundred of us poor devils appealing to the "Morning Star, the Health of the weak, the Refuge of Sinners," is heartbreaking. And it is nearly always the old litany we used to sing at home when during the May evenings the candles were lighted before Our Lady's statue . . . I have applied to be allowed to serve Mass, as I did of old at home; but as yet I have not had my request.

[1] The sermon which Father Sheehan preached on this his first visit to the prison was on the Last Judgment. It was written out in full, as appears from MS. left by him and marked "preached in the Prison at Dartmoor, 1876."

But the time came when Father Sheehan was to return to his native land, though the bonds he had forged in his new field of labor were growing stronger from day to day. Perhaps it was altogether providential that he did not remain longer in England, for the transformation might have eliminated from his conscious sympathies that ardor for the welfare of his own people which was to become a passion with him not many years later.

V

BACK IN IRELAND

1877–1881

FATHER SHEEHAN had acquitted himself with credit of his duties as administrator of the Exeter parish. He was liked by the people, especially by the poor and the children. The non-Catholic element recognized his ability and his aesthetic sense in public matters whereby he approved the better and higher things. Those who had heard him preach were attracted by the evident sincerity of his pointed and withal polished eloquence. People of a religious turn commended his conduct, for they saw he was a priest who regulated his life not merely according to the obligations imposed by conventional rule, but by the more exalted standard of the evangelical counsels. If there were any who were fastidious or intolerant of his Celtic ways, their censure remained unheeded amid the common verdict that the young priest had at all times shown his readiness to coöperate with the best element in the city for the moral and civic betterment of the community.

His Bishop, however, had need of him at home. That Father Sheehan was pleased at the thought of getting back to Ireland would appear from a note addressed to Father Edmund Morton, who had given him the unofficial news of his appointment as curate in his native town, Mallow.

CATHOLIC CHURCH, EXETER.
Tuesday.

MY DEAR FR. MORTON,

Your letter of yesterday was a surprise and a pleasure to me. It seems too good to be true. I am thinking of going over on Friday or Saturday, but I have not yet heard from the Bishop . . .

The new priest comes here to-day, and I leave on Thursday after inducting him. What a lot of things I have to say. Goodbye till we meet.

PATRICK A. SHEEHAN.

Thus far he had left himself unreservedly in the hands of his superior, who was sure to have at heart the welfare of his ward. But now there arose some misgivings as to his future. The thought that he would be able to make use of the experiences acquired on the English mission, for the benefit of his own people in Ireland, no doubt appealed to his zeal. On the other hand, his going back to Ireland seemed like beginning the work of self-improvement and adjustment all over again. A curacy in the country offered but little room for the display of talent or for originality and organization. He would simply have to do as others had done before him, or as his pastor bade him. The situation recalls a passage in one of his novels.[1]

"Why, man," said the young priest, "if I were to return now I should have to commence all over again."

"How is that?"

"You see everything in Ireland is fixed in a cast-iron mould. They don't understand change which is progress. Everything is judged by age. You buy a bottle of wine — the first question is: How old is it? You buy a horse: How old? Everything is old and feeble and decrepit; and no matter how distinguished a man may be in England or America, you sink down to a cipher the moment you touch the Irish shore; and a Newman or a Lacordaire takes his place at the end of the queue. No one asks: What can you do? or What have you done? But, How old are you? How long have you been on the mission? Result: After a few spasmodic efforts, which become convulsive, you sink into a lethargy, from which there is no awakening. You become aged, not by years, but by despair."

Such would seemingly be the condition awaiting him at home, whereas in England there was a better prospect for him. One of his ideal pictures was that of a chaplain's

[1] *Luke Delmege*, Chap. XXII, "Euthanasia."

quarters in an English mansion at a seaside town, with "books and pen and paper, crowds of converts, a quarterly article in the *Dublin Review*, select society, an occasional run to the city or to Exeter to preach a great sermon, correspondence with the world's literati; then ecclesiastical honors, and beautiful dignified old age." That was not to be, however. He was to go back to the Irish mission and work among his own people.

In due time he arrived in Dublin. Father Burton, an old classmate of his, and at this time assigned to Fermoy, writes: "I have a distinct recollection of our meeting at Fitzpatrick's Hotel, where we both put up for a time. Before returning to Mallow we arranged to visit friends in the neighborhood of Kanturk, and thither we drove on an outside car the following day — *prorsus jucunde diem protraximus illam.*" Another encounter with one of his countrymen immediately upon his arrival is inimitably described by Father Sheehan in a sort of parody under the title of "Altruism." On repairing, hungry and tired, to the lavatory of the hotel, he is accosted by a lodger who is making his ablutions somewhat demonstratively. To catch the full humor of the situation it must be remembered that Father Sheehan had, during his sojourn abroad, adopted the current pronunciation of English, discarding the rich brogue of his mother tongue, so welcome to the Irish ear. This un-Irish mode of speech he consistently retained through the remainder of his life. The Irishman addresses our young priest from England:

"Nice day, sir?"

"Yes, rather cold for October."

"Oh, I perceive you are from across the Channel. I have the greatest esteem for the English character, sir. I always say we have a great deal to learn from our neighbors. Coming to see Ireland, sir? You will be delighted and disappointed. Going south to Killarney of course?"

"Yes, I am going south," said Luke, on whom the familiarity grated. "I am an Irish priest."

"Oh. I beg your reverence's pardon," said the other, dropping

at once into the familiar brogue. "Begor, now, we don't know our priests from the parsons. They dress all alike."

"An Irishman always distinguishes," said Luke.

"To be sure. To be sure. — Now whenever I'm in England, I always go to Sandringham. I have a standing invitation from the Prince of Wales to stay with him whenever I am in England. 'Wire me, Fitzgerald,' he says, 'and I shall have my carriage waiting for you. No ceremony. One good turn deserves another.' — Are you lunching here, your reverence? As good as you can get in the city. But ask for the undercut of the sirloin. Say Fitzgerald recommended it."

Later on we have the following scene in the dining room.

"What can I have for luncheon?" he asked the waiter.

The waiter jerked the napkin over his left shoulder, placed his two hands on the table and asked confidentially: —

"Well now, and what would your reverence like? I suppose ye're travelling for the good of yer health and ye want somethin' good?"

"Quite so. Then let me have a cut of roast beef — the undercut, you know."

"Begor, we're just out o' that. There was a party of gintlemin come in a few minits ago; and divil a bit but the bone they left."

"Well, let me see. Have you roast mutton or a fowl?"

"Bedad we had yesterday. But this is the day for the roast beef."

"I see. Well look here. I am in a hurry to catch a train. Let me have a chop."

"The very thing. While ye'd be saying thrapsticks. Wan or two?"

"Two. And some vegetables."

"And what will ye dhrink?"

"Water."

The waiter straightened himself, rubbed his chin, and stared at Luke meditatively. Then he went to the kitchen.

When the rest of the course had been served Luke handed him a sovereign.

He almost fainted. When he had recovered he went over to the window, Luke calmly watching him, and held the sovereign up to the light. Then he glanced at Luke suspiciously. A second

time he examined the coin, and rang it on the table. Then he bit it and rang it again. Finally he vanished into the kitchen.

"You seemed to have doubts about the sovereign?" said Luke when he emerged with the change.

"Is it me, yer reverence? Divil a doubt! Doubt a priest indeed! No, yer reverence, I am a poor man, but I knows me religion."

"Then why did you ring it, and bite it, and examine it?"

"Is it me, yer reverence? Oh no, God forbid that I should forget mesel in the presence of a priest."

"But I saw you do it," said Luke, who was fully determined to let no such insincerity pass unreproved.

"Ah sure that's a way I have," said the waiter. "They thry to break me of it, but they can't. I got it from me poor father — may the Lord have mercy on his sowl." [1]

All this was very unlike what the homecoming priest had but recently met in England, where everything seemed so straight and deliberate and poised and polished and mechanical.

His old familiars noted the change in him. "Where did he get that imperial accint?" — "And his way so stiff and solemn and grand?" — "I wonder if the poor will like him," a nun had said. "They will, Sister, dear, as soon as he gets his bearings and they find him out; for he has the Irish priestly heart underneath all that grand English air which, if it don't wear off, will not prevent the inner wheels of his God-given faith from moving in the regular way of their natural mechanism."

Bishop John McCarthy, having watched over the young priest from his infancy, as a true godfather, felt probably an intelligent sympathy with his ideals, and accordingly with the disappointments which must await Father Sheehan in Ireland if he applied himself with anything like the apostolic zeal that was in him.

It may then have been part of the Bishop's pastoral wisdom to send the young priest to his native town of Mallow, where any accidental excess of apostolic ardor in

[1] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXV, "Altruism," p. 325.

the attempt at molding people and circumstances upon a foreign pattern would meet with the kindly indulgence and good-natured humor begotten of old associations. If such was the case, we shall see that it took Father Sheehan some time before he could enter into the benevolent designs of his superior and friend. He retained the idea of improving the Irish people after the model he had learnt to admire in England. And if in the attempt he saw at times the humorous side of an incongruous situation, he did not give up at once the belief that he was destined to succeed. Eventually he found the proper mean. But it was not until he had reached mature age that he realized how hard it is to carve human nature into perfect lines, and that the more practical plan is to let it grow under the gentle pressure of prayerful direction. Ultimately he adapted himself and his measures so as to reach the mind and heart of those whom he intended to improve and elevate. It looked for many a year like failure; but he succeeded, though without the glamor that would have made his triumph jubilant in earlier days.

In some ways it was an advantage that he was to be still dependent and under direction. Whatever schemes of reform on the model of his English experiences he might project, he should have to consult not merely opportunities but also the views and wishes of his pastor.

The spiritual interests of Mallow at this time were in the keeping of the venerable Archdeacon O'Regan. He had been Vicar Forane and Parish Priest of Kanturk, and was now head of the Diocesan Chapter of Cloyne, and Vicar General. There were three curates.

Father Sheehan had shown no disappointment at being sent to his native town as curate. He had apparently welcomed the change. Still it would seem that for a while the temptation of a yearning to go back to England some time or other, followed him.

"My books are in their cases. I daren't unpack them."

"Why?"

"Why, because, first I shall not remain here. Secondly, there

is no room to put them in. Thirdly, those women would ruin them. Fourthly, where is the use in continuing one's studies in such a country?"

"Phew," said his friend, an old neighbor of his parish, "you have a lot to learn and unlearn yet which is not found in books."

"I have learnt that life is very miserable, whatever."

"A priest should not complain. He is a soldier. The outpost duty is not pleasant, but it is a duty. The Church was not created for priests but the priesthood for the Church." [1]

Few of Father Sheehan's associates among the Irish clergy, and fewer still of his parishioners, would be likely to attach particular distinction to his having been administrator of a respectable parish across the Channel. To them he was simply a curate in a provincial town in Ireland, lately returned to his native diocese. He himself knew his merits and that moreover he was the ward of the Bishop. One would suspect that all this made him feel a bit restive and perhaps desirous of other arrangements. But he was to remain here in Mallow for several years.

The archdeacon was a saintly man, who at his age saw the supernatural side of things as the only one really worth while considering. But holiness of the normal type does not greatly impress younger workers who are engaged in heroic pursuits, and who consider that life is meant for strenuous work, for self-improvement, and for reform. This latter was Father Sheehan's bent and determination, as is very plain from his writings, especially his earlier efforts. The impulse was too strong at the outset to allow him to reflect much. This was a handicap to his priestly zeal. "Surrounded in spirit with the atmosphere which he had brought from abroad with him, he failed to enter into the traditions and beliefs of the people. In trying to modify these for better and more modern practices, he was both right and wrong. He could never understand why the people should not fit in their ideas with his; nor the necessity of proceeding slowly in uprooting ancient customs, and conserving whatever was useful in them. Hence he was at

[1] *Ibid*, Chap. XXVI, "The Secret of The King," p. 347.

times in conflict with the people's ideas. They were puzzled at what they deemed an almost sacrilegious interference with their habits; he was annoyed at their unwillingness to adopt his ideals. But they had too deep and reverential a fear and respect for his sacred character to say anything but what was deferential."

How clearly he saw all this in subsequent years he brings out in *My New Curate*, and to some extent also in *The Blindness of Dr. Gray*. The vivid realism with which he therein states his sentiments have led many to believe that the Canon Sheehan of later years was the "Daddy Dan" of his first famous book; just as others have seen his earlier life protrayed in *Luke Delmege*. This is not quite correct. While most of his novels contain actual experiences, and while there are passages here and there in which he puts his own thoughts and sentiments into the mouth of the hero whom he portrays, no one character in any of his books completely reveals the writer as he lived. Much of the convictions of his later years is to be found in the sentiments of the grave old parish priest of Doonvarragh, Lackagh, and Athboy, Dr. Gray. Yet there are great differences here also.

Characters that are sound are like good wines. They become more sweet as they mature, whereas selfish natures sour with age. This is exemplified in Canon Sheehan. It explains the apparent contrast between the severe eagerness with which, in the earlier period of his ministry, he noted and roundly scored defects of national character, and the generous tolerance, and even ingeniousness, with which he apologized for, or turned into virtues, those same faults, during later years, when he was pastor in Doneraile. And this fact alone indicates that his ideals were not begotten of mere conceit or moody egotism, but sprang from a high conception of duty as he saw it. If anything like harsh judgment is found in his later books, it is because these parts represent the earlier period of his activity as a writer, and were only utilized when he was too ill to do any fresh work. But it is interesting, here as

elsewhere, to follow the fashioning of his ideals even when he presents them to us in the slightly exaggerated forms in which writers advocating certain reforms commonly clothe their figures. Like Dickens or Thackeray he sometimes overdraws his characters in order that they may arrest attention.

He had, at this time, some fixed ideals. They were excellent, if not always practicable. In England he had been given to understand that punctuality was one of the cardinal virtues of the people, and that if Mass did not begin on the minute most of the congregation would leave the church under the assumpton that there was to be no service. Here in Ireland it was different. But the English way was better; so he sought to introduce it. The attempt is pictured in *Luke Delmege*. The first time the curate found himself obliged to attend a funeral in the country the hour for the rite had been set at eleven o'clock.

"Eleven o'clock is eleven o'clock," said Luke with emphasis. "It is not five minutes to eleven nor five minutes after eleven; but eleven, you understand?"

"Av coorse, yer reverence. 'Tis a long journey to the abbey and we must start airly."

Luke was at the house of mourning at five minutes to eleven. There was no sign of a funeral. He protested.

"The hearse and the coffin have not come, yer reverence," was the reply.

"But why not? Were they ordered?"

"They were ordhered to be here on the sthroke of tin," was the answer.

At about half-past eleven the hearse was driven up leisurely.

"Why weren't you here at the time appointed?" said Luke angrily.

"The toime appinted?" said the driver coolly; "yerra, what hurry is there? Isn't the day long?"

Luke gave up the riddle. Half-past eleven came, twelve, half-past twelve; and then the neighbors began to gather. Luke's temper was rising with every minute that was thus lost. And then he began to notice the young girls of the house rushing out frantically, and dragging in the drivers and jarvies to the house of

mourning, from which these soon emerged, suspiciously wiping their mouths with the back of the hand. Luke seized one.

"You have had drink there?" he said.

"A little taste agin the road, yer reverence," the man said.

"That's enough," said Luke. He tore off the cypress lawn, which the priests of Ireland wear in the form of a deacon's stole, and flung it on the ground, then he turned the horse's head homeward. There was a cry of consternation, and a shout. But Luke was determined. He peremptorily ordered the man to drive forward. One or two farmers begged and besought him to remain, and even caught his horse's head. Luke took the whip and drove his horse into a gallop; and never drew rein till he entered the yard.

"You're early home," said the old priest.

"Yes," said Luke, laconically.

"You didn't go the whole way? Anything wrong with the mare?"

"I didn't attend the funeral," said Luke. "I saw them dispensing drink; and the statutes forbade me to attend further."

"The wha-at?" said the old man.

"The statutes — the statutes of the diocese," said Luke impatiently.

"Phiew-ew-ew-ew," whistled the old man. And, after a pause: "You'll have a nice row over this, young man. They may forgive all your abuse of the country, and your comparisons with England. But they'll never forgive you for turning your back on the dead. And Myles McLoughlin was the decentest man in the parish."

"But are not the statutes clear on the point?" said Luke, "and where is the use of legislation if it is not carried out?"

"You are not long in this country?" said the old man.

The next Sunday a deputation called on the pastor asking for the removal of "this Englishman." He tried to "soother them down." [1]

Whether or not young Father Sheehan had actually to meet such or similar situations at Mallow, it is certain that he was conscious of a contrast between the people's ingrained notions and his aspirations in their behalf. As he says of Luke:

[1] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXVII, "A Great Treasure," p. 352.

Cast into new environments, how could he fit in suddenly with them? Suave, gentle, polished, cultivated, through secret reflection, large reading, and all that had been filed down into tranquil and composed mannerism, how was he to adapt himself to circumstances, where a boisterous and turbulent manner would be interpreted as an indication of a strong, free, generous mind, and where his gentle urbanity would be equally interpreted as the outer and visible sign of a weak, timid disposition, with too great a bias toward gentility?

There was an alternative. He might be able to lead the people by persuasion to adopt the better ways which he had discovered abroad.

"Now, I don't want to hurt your feelings, Connor," he would say to a parishioner; "but don't you know that that festering heap of compost is a nest of typhus and diphtheria? The horrible miasma pollutes the entire atmosphere and fills the house with disease."

"I suppose so, yer reverence; but begor no one died in this house for the past three ginirations, except of ould age."

"That is exceptional," Luke would reply; "but apart from the question of sanitation, don't you think that a few flower-beds would look better than that dismal swamp?"

"Of course, yer reverence, but we would have to pay dear for them."

"Not at all. A few wall flowers in spring, and a few tufts of primroses — there are thousands of them in the springtime in the hedgerows — and a few simple geraniums in the summer, would not cost you one half crown. Now, Lizzie, don't you agree with me?"

"I do, Father," Lizzie would say.

"So do I, yer reverence; but it isn't the cost of the flowers I am thinking of, but the risin' of the rint. Every primrose would cost me a shillin'; and — "[1]

However much he tried, he found it hard to make his purpose understood. Nor could he persuade himself that the methods he was advocating were not in the right direction; he was sure that the pattern was of a superior type, and that in abandoning it he would have to descend. As

[1] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXVI, "The Secret of the King," p. 343.

a last resort — there were the young people. They could learn, and they were not hampered by traditions and obstinacy. They were growing up to be the representatives and defenders of the principles for which he himself, like every other loyal Irishman, would have eventually to stand. Whatever the educational opportunities that made the English youth superior, he knew that his own people were as capable as any other in the world. All they lacked was the proper training. And they would need it in the days when political independence should call on Ireland to manage her own affairs.

From records in the local press of the time it is evident that Father Sheehan, shortly after assuming his duties as curate at Mallow, undertook to organize the youth of the town who had left school. He did so with the purpose not only of promoting their spiritual welfare, but also of sowing, as far as possible, the seeds of intellectual culture. The training he proposed to give them would be of service in their later intercourse with the outside world. Now that he foresaw conditions, in the political as well as the social life of the nation, that seemed to demand preparation on the part of those who were some day to shape the destinies of the race, he had found the opportunity for congenial work.

Among the means adopted to give permanence to his efforts to elevate the ideals of Irish youth was the establishment of a Literary Society in the Mallow parish. We have the inaugural address delivered by him on that occasion, in the winter of 1880. In outlining the purpose of the society he recalls the two maxims he had found in Carlyle. One is: "Know thy work and do it." This, he says, is the latest message that has come to us from the "Voices and Sages," the men that have thought and spoken and written for the well-being of mankind. The other is: "To make one spot of God's world a little brighter, better and happier, here is work for a god." He believed that the first of these two statements contained the soundest and safest motto for each individual member of society; and

that the second was a perfect embodiment of the ideas that suggested the formation of the society. It is quite apparent from this that he did not regard the work to be done by the members as confined exclusively, nor even mainly, to literary culture. His aim was much more comprehensive and included all that tended to strengthen, chasten, elevate mind and heart, while improving deportment. "It is to make you, gentlemen, worthy of yourselves, worthy of your religion, and worthy of your country, that this Institute has been established. We know the vast importance that attends the education of young men, we know what a power they are in every community, what great influence they wield for good or for evil. We utterly disdain the intention of making this Institute a mere place of amusement, where a few hours may be spent with pleasure, but without profit. We have a higher ambition. We desire to make it the means of supplying to you a knowledge of all those subjects that are interesting to the modern world, and are familiar to the minds of educated men."[1]

There were as a result regular lectures and monthly debates, which aimed to elicit the latent talent in the parish, and at the same time to create a taste for literature, while fostering and training the youthful minds to reason closely and logically and to express their thoughts with accuracy and ease.

As there were already two confraternities in the parish that supplied the religious wants of the young people, it became comparatively easy to interest the members in the upholding of the noble ideals thus placed before them by their spiritual guide.

Other causes helped to stimulate these efforts in the direction of educating the younger generation to higher things. The government had proposed a new program of education, which promised to open certain avenues to civil advancement by competition. This plan had been issued just before Father Sheehan left England to return to his native country. A friend, of whom he writes that "his

[1] "Irish Youth and High Ideals," in *Early Essays and Lectures* (edition 1912).

rare mind could at a glance foresee consequences," had said to him in regard to the passing of the Intermediate Education Act in 1878, "The Tories have outwitted the Irish priesthood at last. They have introduced into the Primary and Secondary Schools — and they will introduce into the University scheme — the system of payment by results. The consequence will be that in a short time your whole educational system in Ireland, from the lowest bench in the country school to the *aula maxima* of the University, will be thoroughly secularized."

Father Sheehan remembered these words, and, young as he was, he set himself to combat the danger. He devoted all the time he could spare from the practical duties of the pastoral mission to improving the course of religious instruction, both in the schools and among the young people who had passed from the control of the catechism classes. This became one of the marked activities in his life, and he attained thereby excellent results both here in Mallow, and afterward in his own parish at Doneraile.

CURATE AT THE QUEENSTOWN CATHEDRAL — 1886

VI

CALLED TO QUEENSTOWN

1881–1888

FOUR years had passed since his return to Ireland. He had added fresh experience to his store of pastoral knowledge. He had come to understand that the difference of national temper between his own people and their political masters was fundamental, and that this fact could not be ignored in their economic and religious improvement. He had come to see the two nations by comparison on a common scale, and as a result his love for his countrymen had taken on a degree of deeper affection than he had been conscious of in the years before.

Early in 1881 the Bishop called him to the Cathedral in Queenstown. It must have been gratifying to Father Sheehan to find himself now closely associated with his old pastor and friend, the one man who perhaps understood him thoroughly and bore him in his heart. It seemed like the return of the old days when Patrick Sheehan was the altar boy and Father McCarthy, now the Bishop, the parish priest of Mallow.

The new field of labor thus opened to the young curate's zeal was to be one of varied activities. Whilst unquestionably more difficult than the work at Mallow, the duties of his new post were likely to offer him the very opportunities he required for the exercise of his special talents and gifts of observation. He at once bent himself with whole-hearted devotion to his tasks, and in particular to the catechetical work of the schools. To preaching and instruction he proposed to add now the systematic aid of the pen. Often before he had felt the impulse to write. In fact he had contributed articles from time to time to the local journals. For the rest, his literary work had been

mostly fugitive papers and occasional verse. His efforts had been encouraged by Father Matthew Russell, the genial editor of the *Irish Monthly*. But now he would turn his energies to an appeal for wider interest in the educational problems of the time in which he was concerned. He felt that there was a field wherein the pen could do more good than either the pulpit or personal efforts confined to his immediate locality.

His first article appeared in September, 1881.[1] It was entitled "Religious Instruction in Intermediate Schools." The writer urged the establishment of a system of religious training that would be adequate to the wants of the age. The course should be made correlative with the secular system and in a sense also obligatory, either by episcopal supervision, or by public criticism directed toward religious as well as intellectual advancement. He pointed out the pernicious influences which the standard of competition in secular education was apt to exercise on the minds of young men ambitious for success. These needed a wide-reaching knowledge of their faith, so as to allow their meeting on even ground of debate and criticism the skeptics and materialists of modern society.

"To prevent contamination from these pernicious doctrines (of materialistic science) by our Irish youth," he wrote, "must be the proximate and pressing duty of those to whom the faith and morals of the rising generation are largely entrusted. There is sound material for a new knighthood of chivalrous faith and virtue, if all the generous impulses of virgin minds and hearts be swayed by the convictions that have hitherto governed our people. . . . But if religious instruction be practically eliminated from our common schools, by not being raised to a level of importance with secular learning, we shall not remain a high principled race, nor become a cultured one."

The position taken by Father Sheehan was of course not new. The subject had been for some time discussed among the bishops, especially in the north of Ireland, where

[1] *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, Vol. II, pp. 521–531.

the proposed legislation would gain more rapid influence over the population, largely Protestant. The Bishop of Down and Connor had prescribed a detailed course of Religious Instruction which covered nine grades, beginning with the infants, not classed, under six years. The scheme provided for regular religious inspection. Of this measure it was said that it did more for the protection of the faith and morals of the Catholic flock than had been effected by all the other measures of zealous pastors. The Very Rev. Daniel McCashin, of St. Malachy's College, Belfast, commented on the scheme.[1]

At the same time the matter of Religious Examinations in Primary Schools had been discussed, and a prominent priest in the Dublin archdiocese writing anonymously had pointed out the danger of emphasizing the importance of literary instruction over that of Christian Doctrine. He had cited the evidence of the late Bishop of Cloyne, given in 1870 before the Royal Commission on Primary Education, when a program of studies introduced in France had been suggested as suitable for the schools in Ireland:

> Do not take as a model . . . the bill promoted by M. de Faillard (in France) when he was minister of Public Instruction. One of the Committee who sat upon that bill was Mons. Thiers, who had been minister in different capacities under Louis Philippe. In his report to the Corps Legislatif he said: "We have been, up to the present, developing the intelligence of young Frenchmen; we have been imposing *no restraints on the passions of hearts*, and the result is that France is in a state of constant revolution. The generation trained from 1772–1792 brought about a revolution. Another revolution in 1830; another revolution in 1848, and you may be quite sure that France has not done with revolutions yet. — Gentlemen, we must retrace our steps. We must make education more religious than it has been up to the present moment; we must put it upon the former basis; and if we do not, I tremble for the future of France." [2]

The embers thus glowing in different parts of Ireland Father Sheehan hoped to kindle anew. His article gives

[1] See article in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* for 1881. [2] *Ibid.*

us in a nutshell the aims and ideals which later on, though in a somewhat altered fashion, he sets forth in *Geoffrey Austin* and *The Triumph of Failure*. Perhaps his plea, which indicates remarkable ability to master a difficult situation, might have been taken up with enthusiasm if he had been better known. A certain diffidence and fear of criticism had caused him to withhold his full name from the reader. As the article failed to arouse the expected interest on the part of the clergy, he did not follow it up.

But he continued to write. In December of the same year the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* published a thoughtful paper by him on the subject of Christian Art. It was meant as a protest against the attempt to substitute Pagan models for the old Christian ideals. The article was occasioned by a picture, exhibited in Dublin in 1880, which had attracted the young priest, perhaps because of its Dantesque conception and a certain novelty in its expression of spiritual forms. The subject was "Satan Watching the Sleep of Christ." It was from the brush of Sir Noel Paton, the English painter, whose work, on the whole religious in its trend, contradicted the naturalism advocated by contemporary representatives of the Academy. The analysis which Father Sheehan makes of the picture is of value here only as indicating the aesthetic tendencies shown elsewhere in his writings. It is in keeping with his predilection for the mystical in poetry, of which element Sir Noel Paton was likewise a recognized exponent.

During the following year we find an article by Father Sheehan in the same review on "The Effects of Emigration on the Irish Church" (Oct. 1882). Later, in March 1883, one on "Gambetta"; and another in October, 1884, on "Emerson's Philosophy." Shortly after this, November 1884, he contributed a paper on "Free Thought in America." Then for a time his pen seems to have rested. Two years later he discusses "Education at German Universities," in three articles.[1]

[1] June, July, and August, 1886, Vol. VII, pp. 496, 617, 685, of the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*.

These papers mark a further movement in the direction of his studies of German thought and letters. They were intended as a contribution to the discussion of the Irish University question, and treated the subject from the academic rather than the political or economic aspect. He asks: "What ideal should be put before a University of Irish students who hold their country's destinies in their hands?" and whose true ideal is that "Ireland should be once more what it was of old, a nation of saintly scholars."

His answer is that we must go for our model to the German universities. There alone of all modern schools do we find "the highest conception of University life, its spheres of thought limited only by the boundary lines of human knowledge, and its work free and flexible, with rigid principles of religion on the one hand, and patriotism on the other." As his guide he takes, strangely enough, a Frenchman, Père Didon. The latter had, a little while before, given to the world his famous book, *Les Allemands*, which within a single year passed through thirty editions. Its reasonings were the result of study and personal observation by the French Dominican, and they carried no little weight even in England, where his eloquence had attracted large crowds during the Lenten conferences in 1866. Didon's fame as an orator had been superseded by admiration for his practical patriotism when he took up the duties of the military hospital service on the battlefield during the Franco-Prussian War. Next we see the Friar Preacher attend lectures at the Berlin and Leipzig Universities, ostensibly to ascertain the secret of German efficiency, not only in war but in economics, of which he had been witness at Metz. On his return from Berlin he set out to teach his people what he had learnt from its Teuton enemy. He was no more in sympathy with Germans than they were with him, in spite of the praise he felt bound to accord to them and their methods. "He made the largest sacrifice," says Father Sheehan, "a Frenchman can make — that of national vanity — for the purpose of teaching a wholesome lesson to his nation." The French scholar's philosophical

habit of generalization is often broken by an exclamation of pain as he sees some striking instance of German superiority, or some special manifestation of the patriotic instinct, which is so universal in its extent, and so well directed in its energies. From the day he entered the German university to the time when "his book came forth from the press, and was received with a scream of agony from his vain countrymen, Père Didon went through purgatorial pains, with one sentence of solace on his heart: 'You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.'"

Father Sheehan in reviewing the conclusions of the French Dominican incidentally compares them on the one hand with those of John Henry Newman in his *Idea of a University*, and on the other with criticisms by Dr. Pusey. Didon, like Newman, argues for the reëstablishment of the theological disciplines as part of a fully equipped university. He prefers that system to the exclusive training given to students for the priesthood in the French seminaries, where they are practically cut off from touch with the world and its cultural influences, although they may be free also from its dangers. Strength of character, he argues, such as is required to meet religious antagonism in daily social life, is not developed in the hothouse atmosphere of seclusion, whatever the student may gain in devotion to principle and in the exclusive learning that trains the mind and heart to exalted aspirations and the understanding of the higher life. What Father Sheehan, like Père Didon, deemed of greatest educational advantage to the people was in direct opposition to the accepted methods at home. These were calculated to train rather a body of anchorites and ascetics whose spiritual aims were too far removed from the actualities of life. The religious leaders of the nation, under this system of schools, would fail to exercise any missionary or intellectual influence on the people at large. He believes it to be of supreme importance for Ireland that she should share the dominion over human thought, by "utilizing to the utmost the varied and inexhaustible

treasures of talent that lie hidden around us, so that we could explore unknown fields of thought, and garner intellectual wealth till the nations of the earth cried out with envy." He thinks "that Ireland's right is to open sanctuaries of science to strangers, and send apostles of intellect, as we send to-day apostles of faith, to nations that hail the rising, or sadden under the setting sun." "And all this intellectual glory Ireland is to acquire whilst the deposit of faith remains intact, the past and eternal glory of Ireland's fidelity to religion undimmed, whilst her science is not the litter of dead philosophies dug up from the past as the members of a mutilated statue, but the perfection of the fair and living figure that woke to music and immortality when the sunlight of faith had dawned upon it."

It will be seen, when we come to speak in detail of Canon Sheehan's attitude toward the educational problems of the day, how false is the estimate which those of his critics have formed of him who characterized him as a traditionalist, timid of the new, clinging with reactionary instinct to the old. His habitual shrinking from the public gaze by no means implies — as is manifest from his writings on education — that "he lived the Monk," too timid to face the problems of the age, and therefore burying himself out of sight of the world's riddles.

During the following year Father Sheehan again takes up the subject of German superiority in methods of education. In an essay, "The German and Gallic Muse,"[1] he compares German with French poetry. His chief purpose appears to be to combat the hero worship of Victor Hugo, whose death that year had provoked a series of apotheoses in England. To Father Sheehan's mind the eulogies were out of keeping with the estimate formed of the French writer in competent literary circles.

Father Sheehan's bias in favor of German thought, literature, and methods of education did not blind him to the prevailing militarism of that nation. He realizes that "Germany is a huge barrack where every adult must pass

[1] *Irish Eccelesiastical Record*, Jan. 1887, Vol. VIII, pp. 42–53.

through the ordeal of a severe and rigid discipline to form part eventually of a colossal and irresistible force that may crush the French on the one hand, and the Slav on the other." But he recognizes under all this the energy that accounts for success in the higher spheres of life, in education and religion as well as in military discipline. "The faculties of the German mind are so well balanced that there is a perpetual protest between the two extremes of thought — excessive fancy and excessive logic, idealism and materialism, and the mind is kept in that happy mean where each faculty has its full sweep of exercise without the peril of losing itself in the abysses above or the darker abysses of vulgar materialism beneath." He believed with others that the taste for metaphysical studies among the Germans made it impossible for them to be thoroughly irreligious, as are the Latin races when they abandon dogmatic belief. He appeals for corroboration of this to Rénan and Madame de Staël. "Quand un Allemand," writes the former,[1] "se vante d'être impie, il ne faut jamais le croire sur la parole. L'Allemand n'est pas capable d'être irreligieux. La religion, c'est-à-dire l'aspiration du monde idéal est le fond même de sa nature. Quand il veut être athée, il l'est dévotement et avec une sorte d'onction."

In the papers thus far published Father Sheehan betrays the trend of his special studies. These had furnished him with material for his speculations on the subject of classical and religious education. Apparently he paid little attention to the economic problems which later on, as we shall see, engaged him so largely, and which became a very important factor in the solution of the agrarian difficulties in Ireland.

During the summer of 1888 Father Sheehan published [2] a critique of Matthew Arnold's literary work. Shortly after this the *Dublin Review* brought out an article by him on recent Augustinian literature.[3] To this latter subject he makes reference in a letter addressed to the editor of the

[1] *Étude d'histoire religieuse*, p. 417.
[2] *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, June 1888.
[3] *Dublin Review*, Vol. XX, July, pp. 88–107.

Irish Monthly. Father Russell had, as is well known, a remarkable gift for encouraging literary talent. He had befriended among others young William Butler Yeats, who had given indications of superior ability by sundry snatches of romantic poetry and drama, and at this time was engaged in the interpretation of the old Gaelic myths and hero tales, of which Kuno Meyer, the German Celtic scholar, had shortly before given Irish readers an exquisite specimen in his English version of the Kilcormac Manuscript. *The Wanderings of Oisin* is the title of the ode to which Father Sheehan makes reference in the following letter:

QUEENSTOWN, *February* 20, '88.

MY DEAR FATHER RUSSELL,

I enclose Postal Order for 5/-, a mite to help your young poet to the light. The title of the forthcoming Vol. would have made me shudder, if I did not remember that A. de Vere (who has been wasted by Providence in this generation) touched the ghostly Ossian and put flesh on him; and if I had not also very kind and pleasant recollections of some of Mr. Yeats' work in the "Dublin University Review," particularly one very pretty dramatic piece called "Mosada." It is not very Catholic in tone, but is very original and delicate. The refrains at the ends of Mosada's dying speech are very touching.

"The Irish Minstrelsy" has been, I believe, the most successful publication of this age. It has had a pretty large sale, even here. It is really wonderful. I found in it a ballad which I had been looking for for years — since, in fact, I was a child and followed the singer of it in wet and cold up and down the streets of Mallow. I cannot recommend it to you for publication for it is not minstrelsy in the true sense of the word: but I would like to see "Condemned to Death" by "Bridgid" better known than it is. I think you inserted it in an obituary notice of the poetess in the "Monthly."

D. Bernards is 33 years old — a fine German scholar, with excellent taste, and the consciousness that he is not perfect. I have been urging him to try other than National subjects. He has but little time to give to the Muses.

As for myself, my time is so occupied that I can hardly read my Office. I have just finished 50 pages of Manuscript represent-

ing 15 pages of print for the April No. of the *Dublin Review;* and I have been promised 15 pages for July.

I may possibly be seeking your good offices to revise some literary work (very light) in July or August.

I am,

My dear Fr. Russell,

Yours most sincerely,

P. A. SHEEHAN.

Father Sheehan's studies in Augustinian literature, of which the above mentioned article gives evidence, were by no means of a passing or perfunctory nature, such as attracts the ordinary book critic. From his boyhood on, the story of St. Augustine had exercised a singular fascination for him. The dramatic contrasts in the life of the African student at Tagaste and at Carthage, and later on his successes as a rhetorician; then his meeting at the instance of his mother, Monica, with St. Ambrose; his conversion and subsequent missionary activity as Bishop of Hippo, had charmed Patrick Sheehan's youthful imagination, and induced him to add to his own baptismal name that of St. Augustine. His sister Margaret had caught the attraction, so that she too consecrated her life to religion under the patronage of the same Saint. When afterward, at Maynooth, Patrick Sheehan came upon the writings of the great Father of the Church, he found in them fresh fuel to feed the ardor of his intellectual and spiritual aspirations. St. Augustine became to him the exponent of mystical and ascetical theology. It was the Platonic element more than the Aristotelian in theological science that drew young Sheehan during all his studies. Here he found illumination as well as comfort for his soul.

"Love and light," he writes, "such was the eternal cry from St. Augustine's lips and heart. Love for an object so high and so sublime, that the intellect could never weary in the contemplation of its transcendent excellence — love for an object so perfect, that the conscience should never scruple its warmest attachment — love so strong that every pulse of the heart should cling to the loved

object, so that death itself could not break, nor time diminish, the strength of its affection — love so vast that the soul should ever wander through its happy realms without exhaustion, and there find its eternal rest and fruition."

In one of his wanderings he had found an old tome entitled "*Mensis Augustinianus sive Meditationes in Regulam Divi Aurelii Augustini, Hipponensis Episcopi et Ecclesiae Doctoris eximii, ex Sacra Scriptura, Sanctis Patribus, Asceseos Magistris, et probatissimis Auctoribus collectae et distributae in singulos Mensis dies. Una cum Regula a Gelasio di Cilia. Cum facultate et licentia Superiorum. Ratisbonae. 1713.*" The book, it appears, had never been reprinted, and Father Sheehan undertook to copy it, evidently intending it for personal use as a pocket manual of meditation.[1]

Throughout his writings he repeatedly speaks of the life of St. Augustine as of a source from which the devout soul may draw inspirations of holiness and divine wisdom, "and the student of humanity will feel new interest in the struggle of the soul, to disenthrall itself from the fierce promptings of passion and the seductions of intellectual pride. For Augustine was a convert. From a sinner he became a Saint, from a doubter and a denier he became a believer and teacher."

The simultaneous appearance about this time of several works dealing with the life and doctrine of the Saint had given a fresh interest to the subject among ecclesiastical students; and naturally our young curate at Queenstown took part in the defense of the great champion of Catholic orthodoxy, when that orthodoxy was being distorted into a support for Protestantism. At Cambridge University the Hulsean Lectures had made the topic popular, while in the meantime the London Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge had issued the volume in its series which treats of St. Augustine. In America the subject had been taken up by Professor Philip Schaff, who sought to trace a relationship between the Bishop of Hippo and the sixteenth-century reformers; and Dr. Field Spalding

[1] The manuscript in his neat handwriting is not completed.

of Boston had made a close analysis of the great Church Father's teaching, with a view apparently of emphasizing the latter's independence of Roman authority.

Father Sheehan subjects these and some other publications of a kindred nature to a critical examination, and points out that the Protestant contention is far removed from a true interpretation of the Saint's mind. In Dr. Spalding's volume he recognizes more than ordinary sincerity, besides a deep knowledge of the Patristic writings and an adherence to the canons of literary as well as historical criticism. These qualities were wholly missing in the Protestant writers mentioned above. The article became the occasion of a correspondence with Dr. Spalding, which covered several years and ended in the return of the latter to the Catholic Church.

After this, Father Sheehan's contributions to English and Irish periodicals may be said to have ceased, if we except occasional papers, in the main belletristic, written for the *Irish Monthly*.

What he accomplished in other respects while curate at the Cathedral at Queenstown is cherished in the traditions of that parish. There are at this day men, prominent in the community, who unreservedly attribute their success and place of honor in public life to the encouragement and direction of Father Sheehan. Glimpses of his ministry, especially among the poor of that cosmopolitan town, may be gleaned from his writings. From all parts of Ireland the emigrants gathered here to take passage on one or other of the outgoing vessels bound for Liverpool, London, Bristol, Plymouth, and the far-off countries across the Atlantic.

For one who loved his people with an anxiety for their future welfare, seeking to safeguard their faith and attachment to the old sod, there were a thousand opportunities day after day for the exercise of zeal not only in the church but at the wharves and in the hovels that neighbored them. Years afterwards Father Sheehan had opportunity to revisit the scenes of his early labors whenever called to attend the Conferences of the Cathedral Chapter, as Canon. We are

told by one who regularly met him on these occasions that, though reticent about his own doings, he seemed to be familiar with every note of the town's history. His shy, reserved manner gave no indication that he could ever have been popular among the humbler class of the parishioners; "yet when he died all the older generations had instances to relate of his unostentatious kindness, especially to the poor and the sick."

During his stay at Queenstown, which covered nearly eight years, he wrote a number of stories for children, afterward published by the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland. Occasionally he was induced to lecture at Cork, Limerick, and other towns in the South of Ireland, where his fine gifts of expression had become known.

But the strain of overwork soon told upon his constitution. In 1888 he was obliged to desist from all pastoral work. The physician advised him to rest for a while at Glengariff. Here and at Youghal, whither he went later, he did a good deal of reading and some writing of a fragmentary character.

On his recovery the Bishop deemed it advisable to send him back to the country, and accordingly appointed him once more to his native town, Mallow. Here he acted as senior curate, to whom was also assigned the chaplaincy of the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy. Some changes had taken place since his former residence at Mallow. Archdeacon O'Regan, the old pastor, had been replaced by Canon Wigmore, Vicar Forane. There were two junior curates. If the parishioners recalled Father Sheehan's English ways, they also remembered his Irish heart and his goodness to the sick and the poor. The little boys and girls of the school, on whom he had once set his hopes of carrying out his ideals after his return from England, had grown to be young men and women. Resuming the plans he had formed for their welfare, he now began to direct his chief efforts toward their intellectual and spiritual development by means of social organization. He established reading circles and clubs. Through lectures, libraries,

and the shaping and controlling of their amusements, he stirred the townsfolk to an appreciation of the higher and better things he put before them. This activity is gratefully remembered by the people of Mallow, though it is many years since Father Sheehan labored among them.

It was at this period also that he developed a new scheme of writing. He came to realize that, if he could clothe his ideals in the form of short stories or of a novel that would appeal to the sense of popular curiosity, it might inaugurate an apostolate of the Irish press, more attractive and effective than the didactic methods usually adopted for improving mind and heart. Work of this sort would moreover give the writer an opportunity of showing forth the weakness of the old system by applying to it humorous criticism and corrective illustrations. Cervantes and Father de Isla had done this in one way; Dickens and Mark Twain in another. They got a wide hearing. Why not he with a subject much more vital than theirs? What he had written hitherto, accepted by the editors merely for its literary and ethical value, had hardly been noticed. That might have been due in part to the modesty which failed to employ the art of self-advertising. But there must have been other causes also. At any rate, it was evident that the proper stimulus was wanting to make his proposals for improvement popular. With these thoughts in mind he began gathering material, trusting that it might mature to some purpose. The effort was to take definite shape in *Geoffrey Austin* and its sequel.

Meanwhile, in 1893, his fatherly friend and protector, the Bishop of Cloyne, Dr. John McCarthy, had been called to his reward. He had governed the diocese for nearly twenty years, and during that time had proved himself a saintly and zealous father to his flock. He had nearly completed the main building of the beautiful Cathedral begun by his predecessor, and in this he had been greatly helped by Father Sheehan during the eight years of the latter's incumbency at Queenstown. Bishop McCarthy was an able writer and speaker, as well as an organizer and public-

spirited defender of his people's interests. He had been ill a few days. On Friday he took to his bed, and died on the following day, December 9, 1893. His successor was not installed until the autumn of 1894.

In the fall of 1893 Aubrey de Vere, third son of Sir Aubrey, the elder Irish poet, published his volume *Mediaeval Records and Sonnets*. The book at once attracted attention, and became the subject of an extended review by Father Sheehan, printed in the *Irish Monthly* for March, 1894. The Anglo-Irish bard had successfully transposed into the melody of verse the theme of mediaeval Catholic chivalry, just as Mrs. Jameson had done in prose. The appeal, so rich in its power of suggestion, and at the same time so sweetly musical, was meant for readers who knew and could appreciate the inner history of the Church as she speaks through her liturgy. The absence of religious misconception, or of any lyric trick catering to the commonplace, gave a peculiar charm to Aubrey de Vere's poetry. The nicely balanced phrase was but the echo of nature's own rhythm, with whose measured manifestations the poet dealt. Father Sheehan said so in his criticism.

Mr. de Vere was greatly pleased with the analysis and he expressed his appreciation to the editor of the *Irish Monthly*.

CARRAGH CHASE, ADARE, CO. LIMERICK.
March 10, 1894.

MY DEAR FATHER RUSSELL,

Pray accept my best thanks for having given a place in the "Irish Monthly," to that singularly beautiful paper on my *Mediaeval Records*. It is most friendly and indeed only too flattering. That one who writes so well himself, should think so well of what I have written, is of course very gratifying to me, and very encouraging also, considering how few seem to like my poetry, the slow circulation of which my Publishers complain of much, affirming, as all my friends do, that this proceeds mainly from its almost always taking as its theme either Ireland or the Catholic Belgium. When I made my submission to Holy Church I very deliberately selected those two themes for my future poetry, though with a perfect knowledge that they must be unpopular; consequently I am not entitled to complain. If Father Sheehan's

friendly prophecy at the end of his paper, shall one day be fulfilled, it will be more than I deserve, though I certainly do deserve the friendly mention he makes of my Poetry as having escaped the prevailing or at least too frequent demerit of being introverted and egotistical. I am also much pleased at his liking that poem on St. Francis, and wishing me to translate the rest of the "Fioretti." Were I young I might try to do so. In the meantime it is a curious thing that there is just now a person who thinks, I am glad to know, of translating my "Legends of St. Patrick," or some of them, into *prose*, and out of verse, as being thus made more likely to interest our poorer fellow countrymen, *for whose benefit chiefly they were written.* He may be quite right in thinking that they would thus have a better chance of learning more than they now do respecting their great Patron, the most *apostolic* man, I think, of all the saints; for when Messrs. Cassell included that book in their "National Library," and published it for six pence in cloth boards and three pence in paper covers, out of more than 10,000 copies sold only about 100 were sold in Ireland. But one can well imagine Blank Verse, to one accustomed to associate Poetry with Rhyme, appeared only a sort of Prose bewitched.

I am especially pleased at the terms in which Father Sheehan speaks of the "Higher Purgatory," and the "Copernicus," the best, or least imperfect poems I believe in the Vol. The "Higher Purgatory" may be a relief to some excellent persons who are so accustomed to what St. Catherine must have regarded as a one-sided view of Purgatory, that the expectation of it must have lain like a perpetual night-mare on their minds. I intended that Poem and "Copernicus" to embody a good deal of Catholic Philosophy, and the latter everywhere to *imply* the sublime idea of Leotus that the Incarnation was for the total universe, both material and angelic, as well as for the Redemption of man from fire(?). But for that idea I should never have written the "May Carols" which admitted of a fuller expression of that conception.

Will you give Father Sheehan my best thanks for his Essay, which is full of thoughts truly Philosophical on Art, expressed in very eloquent language — please also to send me his address as I should like to forward my Father's "Mary Tudor" and "Sonnets" to him unless he has them already.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

AUBREY DE VERE.

PART II

WHEREIN IS SEEN SOMETHING OF FATHER SHEEHAN'S LITERARY WORK — THE MESSAGE AND CHARACTER OF HIS NOVELS — HIS EFFORTS IN EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL FIELDS, AND LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE

I

PARISH PRIEST OF DONERAILE

IN August, 1894, on the feast of St. Joachim, Dr. Robert Browne, president of Maynooth College, was consecrated Bishop of Cloyne. The new Ordinary was no stranger to the diocese, in which he was born. He had been a student at St. Colman's, Fermoy; and subsequently professor in the same institution. During the last twenty years he had held the offices successively of Dean, Vice-President, and President of Maynooth College. If his position gave him little opportunity of meeting Father Sheehan, who had left Maynooth the year before Dr. Browne entered on his term as Dean, it may nevertheless be presumed that he was familiar with the young priest's early career, and knew his talent, zeal, and administrative ability. It is not surprising therefore that, when the parish of Doneraile became vacant, and the Bishop was obliged to cast about for a suitable candidate to fill the place, his thoughts should have turned toward the Mallow chaplain. The latter was not actually in line for promotion to the pastorate. There were others who by reason of seniority and pastoral qualifications might set up the claim of a prior right. But the Doneraile parish was somewhat encumbered, and there was no likelihood, as the Bishop probably foresaw, of serious competition for the place. Accordingly Father Sheehan was called to the dignity of Parish Priest of Doneraile, and assumed charge on July 4, 1895.

Some passages in *My New Curate* aptly suggest what were his feelings on receiving the appointment.

> It happened in this wise. The Bishop, the old man, sent for me and said with what I would call a tone of pity or contempt — but he was incapable of either, for he was the essence of charity

and sincerity — "Father Dan, you are a bit of a litterateur, I understand; Kilronan is vacant. You'll have plenty of time for poetizing and dreaming there. What do you say to it?"

I put on a little dignity; and though my heart was beating with delight I quietly thanked his Lordship. But when I had passed beyond the reach of episcopal vision, which is far stretching enough, I spun my hat in the air, and shouted like a schoolboy: Hurrah!

You wonder at my ecstasies. Listen. I was a dreamer; and the dreams of my life, when I was shut up in musty towns where the atmosphere was redolent of drink, and you heard nothing but scandal, and saw nothing but sin — the dream of my life was a home by the sea, with its purity and freedom, and its infinite expanse, telling me of God. For from the time I was a child I used to pray that some day when my life's work should be nearly done, and I had put in my years of honest labour in the dusty streets, I might spend my declining years in the peace of a seaside village, and go down to my grave, washed free from the contaminations of life in the daily watching and loving of those

"Moving waters at their priestlike task
Of cold ablution round earth's human shores."

He tells how, on returning home, he met some of his young clerical friends who had already heard of his expected promotion. They teased him:

"You don't mean to say that you have accepted that awful place!" said one.

"You'll have nothing but fish to eat," said another; "the butcher's van goes there but once a week."

"And no society but fishermen," said a third. "And they speak nothing but Irish; and you know you can't bless yourself in Irish."

"Well," I replied, "my Job's comforters, I've accepted Kilronan, and I am going there. If all things go well, and you are good boys, I may ask for some of you as curate —"

"You'll be glad enough to get a curacy yourself in six months," they shouted in chorus.

And so I came to Kilronan, and here I have been since.[1]

He gives also a glimpse of his ideals of reform, and though the scenes he depicts are not those of the little town of the

[1] *A Retrospect*, p. 14.

Ballyhoura hills where he actually worked out his aspirations as a parish priest, yet the underlying thought is that of his pastoral visions — some of which found their fulfilment in Doneraile. He writes:

> What glorious resolutions I made the first months of my residence here . . . Alas! circumstances are too much for us all, and here I am . . . poor old Daddy Dan, with no great earthly troubles, indeed, and some few consolations — my breviary and the grand psalms of hope — my daily Mass and its hidden and unutterable sweetness — the love of the little children and their daily smiles — the prayers of my old women, and, I think, the reverence of the men . . .

Then he compares his ideals with the little he had been able actually to accomplish after years of toil, and the sting of disappointment:

> I suppose it was all my own fault. I remember what magnificent ideas I had. I would build factories, I would ferr the streets, I would establish a fishing station and make Kilronan the favorite bathing resort on the western coast. I would write books and be, all round, a model of push, energy and enterprise. And I did try.[1]

The picture he has here drawn of the parish is that of a seacoast town, apparently Kilkee. There he had been in the habit of spending a brief annual summer vacation. It is a place where one might expect to meet the old associates of his Maynooth days; but the main attraction had been the opportunities which the coast afforded for long rambles along the wild and richly varied western stretches of the Atlantic, such as he graphically describes them in various passages in his later books.

If Doneraile was somewhat different from all this in its outer aspects, it offered, besides its picturesque scenery of river and mountain, abundance of that attractive feature of Irish life and character which was soon to become the source of a new inspiration in his work for souls.

Doneraile is a small town in the County Cork. It is

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

beautifully situated at the base of a western spur of the Galtee Mountains. This range of hills forms, as it were, a meeting place for the four counties of Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, and Cork. A little stream, the Awbeg, a branch of the Blackwater, passes Doneraile and, above it, separates into small pools and streamlets among rocky and shady declines, giving the country round about a pleasant, idyllic aspect. The vegetation is rich and abundant, imparting to the rolling country an alluring beauty, to which old castle ruins add an air of romance. The poet Spenser has made the district famous in his *Faerie Queen* (Book IV, canto XI), though modern archaeologists are not agreed that the stream

> "Giveth name unto that ancient cittie
> Which Kilnemulla cleppèd is of old."

But there is no doubt that the first great Elizabethan poet lived at Kilcoman castle, near by, and sang his musical epics to the accompaniment of

> "Strong Allo tombling from Slewlogher Steep,
> And Mulla mine whose waves I whilom taught to weep."

Father Sheehan took residence in the parish during midsummer of 1895. If he felt grateful that henceforth he was to have a free field for his pastoral activity, he experienced still more satisfaction, at least for the moment, at being in a position to carry out the scheme which had occupied him for some time past at Mallow, namely of writing the book that would explain his new mode of education. The idea of being an author has its charms at all times. It brings with it the conscious power of creating; the suggestion that we are capable of influencing minds far beyond the limits of our immediate surroundings; it conjures up visions of fame and immortality, and all that the imagination can picture of true greatness and lasting success. Not that Father Sheehan meant to exchange his pastoral office and its glories for the occupations and emoluments of "a votary of the desk, — a notched

CANON SHEEHAN IN HIS GARDEN

and cropped scrivener, one that sucks his sustenance, as certain sick people are said to do — through a quill." On the contrary, he meant to use his pen as an adjunct to his opportunities as a teacher of that divine truth which his apostolic and pastoral mission called him to preach. He felt that in this way his voice might reach to every county of his native land.

There had been nothing to prevent him as curate from appearing in print unless it was the difficulty of finding a publisher willing to take the risks. But he could not have spoken with the same freedom as now that he was pastor; he would have had to consider the feelings if not the opinions of his rector and associates. Even if his book were published anonymously, the fact could hardly be kept a secret in the parish; and if he said anything to displease his comrades in arms, it might react disagreeably upon himself.

But now, added to the dignity of a parish priest, which fact was likely to recommend him to the sellers of books, he enjoyed the freedom to act without having to consult others; freedom from their criticism, their power to dissuade or to thwart any enterprise that could make him a true evangelist to his people and nation. He was independent in a manner even of the Bishop. The worst which that august dignitary could do was "send him a curate who might break his heart."

II

HIS FIRST BOOK

THE book of which the material was all ready was *Geoffrey Austin*. Doneraile was to be the place of Geoffrey's birth.

As the reader will doubtless recall, Father Sheehan had, during the years of his curacy at Queenstown, as also later at Mallow, found special delight in spurring on the young men of the parish to higher efforts and ambitions. His aim had been to withdraw them from attractions that divided their appreciation of those better things which were awaiting them with the dawn of the newly promised emancipation. He would prepare them definitely for the responsibilities which the anticipated independence of Ireland was to bring at least to some of them. He meant to defend his countrymen against the demagogues who saw in the heralded freedom only opportunities to satisfy their greed and selfish ambition. Patriotic Irishmen had been hitherto fed upon hopes; they had made sacrifices; they had followed leaders in whose sincerity they placed absolute confidence. Time and again they had found themselves deceived and defeated through lack of caution or forethought, or of union among the heads of their parties.

Now, with the hopes based not only on the justice of Ireland's cause and an ardent patriotism, but on the determination of a strong Parliamentary party that could defeat the Unionists, and hold in check the obstructionists, the means of eventually wresting from the present government the consent to Home Rule seemed clear. If now the young men of Ireland were to take a successful hand in the affairs of their reborn nation they needed more

than the material strength of numbers and an ardent patriotism. One reason why hitherto their aspirations had been frustrated was their lack, in the past, of opportunities for higher or even ordinary education. Whilst nominally the means for elementary training were not being denied them, the actual conditions rendered it impossible for the poor to avail themselves of it.

The prospects of Emancipation were thus beset with dangers that lurked in an unpreparedness to make use of the newly acquired freedom that would reconstitute the nation.

There were other dangers. The youth of Ireland were sure to be hampered in their struggle for advancement by traditions that had crystallized in the popular mind. Many of the intellectual leaders, however high-minded and energetic, were wedded to methods that threatened to leave the younger generation behind in the struggle for what was conducive to true moral and civic welfare. In Father Sheehan's estimate it was essential that the Catholic priesthood should take a definite part in and find new ways to strengthen the Catholic conscience of the nation as a defense against the schemes of politicians who cared little or nothing for the ancient glory of Ireland. The course to be adopted, to elevate the consciousness of the race to the realization of their high destiny, was, as has already been pointed out, the systematic leavening, through religious instruction, of all the educational forces in the country. The clergy were to emphasize religion as a requirement of efficiency in connection with a high standard of intellectual culture in the schools and colleges. Thus an effectual barrier would be placed against the strong materialistic tendency which, in the guise of an advanced science, was beginning to dominate the schools.

Moreover, he saw that the new generation was being withdrawn to foreign countries, especially America. The Irish youth was suffering from the practical contamination of an absorbing passion for wealth under the plea of improved industrial conditions. Thence grew the desire

to leave the home country, and the striving after those purely secular ambitions and comforts of life which must produce not only a weakening of the old faith, but the eventual destruction of native simplicity, domestic affection, and attachment to the motherland. Religion, ombined with love of country, had been the pride of the Irish race for centuries. It had made the people strong, this clinging to their homesteads and native soil, however poor. The old sod, with its memories of hardship, had become a sacred thing by the very fact that it kept alive the hope of better times. And now that the dawn of these happier days was breaking, the country was being depopulated and deprived of its hardy and simple strength. These reflections made Father Sheehan anxious to keep his people from emigrating; and he did everything in his power to discourage those over whom he exercised influence from leaving home. He impressed on them the sentiment that Ireland was the home of her children's faith, and to Ireland they were bound in loyalty to cling. Those who had gone, he regarded as exiles, to be pitied. To a lady from Limerick who had made her home in America and who was visiting Kilkee, he gave, on her bidding him farewell, the following touching lines, expressive of his feeling on the subject:

"Child whom the Fates have cast afar
— Thine Irish faith thy guiding star —
An exile; but with all the rights
That bind thee to thy motherland,
Whose loveliness, austere but grand,
Her children's loyalty requites —

Take these few lines from one whose worth
Is but his pride of Irish birth,
His loyalty to faith and race;
Who bids thee in thy life Godspeed;
In kindly thought and noble deed,
And at the last the glorious meed,
The Vision — face to face."

Father Sheehan gave vent to a similar feeling in another form on an occasion when the writer discussed with him the absence of agricultural industry and of efforts, apparently, to cultivate the large tracts left to pasture for grazing sheep. With no little spirit he said, "Do you want to know the reason why our fields are not tilled? Why, you Americans who speak of the indolence of our people are yourselves the cause of this lack of apparent thrift. In the first place, you ship over here grain and produce, selling it to our commission merchants at a shilling a bushel less than it costs us to produce it, if we consider the rental of our farms. Next you entice our young men and girls by holding out to them the allurements of the American dollar. They find they can keep the old people more comfortable by leaving them and earning a good income in Yankee land. Of course they don't realize that they are sacrificing in many cases their faith and the love of old Ireland, and all that goes with our treasured traditions. But they make money; and then they come back for a visit; to show off their folly, and to entice other young people away from our farms to follow them. It is sad; but we cannot help it."

He was averse to the indiscriminate adoption of American standards of living; inasmuch as it meant a depreciation, and in some cases a despising, of the traditions that had made Ireland strong in religious conviction, and that had kindled noble national aspirations, despite the humiliations heaped upon her for centuries. His purpose was to prepare the youth for the new crisis, a crisis that involved a determined struggle, — not against the old foe next door, who was beginning to yield of his own accord, but against a double enemy from within, the spirit of indifference on the one hand and the danger of secular and commercial pride on the other. He realized fully how both of these conditions threatened to destroy the deep-rooted sentiments of religious devotion and unselfish patriotism that had distinguished the children of the Isle of Saints in the past above all the nations of the earth.

In order to battle successfully against this dual foe it was, as has been said, necessary first of all to warn the educators themselves. Father Sheehan was well aware that he held no special commission to correct his brethren, least of all the professors in the colleges, or the members of the episcopate and the clergy who were responsible for the guidance of the people. He merely meant to speak as one who sensed the coming peril; as one who was willing to help in overcoming it by emphasizing its insidiousness. There could be no offense in an honest effort to popularize the best methods by which to ward off an imminent danger.

It was with this purpose that he had studied the problem and found the material which he gradually developed into the form of his story. In this way *Geoffrey Austin* had been nearly completed, and now that he was a pastor, he saw his way free to getting it published. It would be only a beginning. For here in his country rectory, where the charms of nature, the music of the birds, and the murmur of the mountain stream soothed his nerves, he would continue to put his inspirations into written periods, freighted with the burden of an educational gospel that should carry light and joy to his countrymen. There loomed up, of course, occasional misgivings. He might meet with disappointment. The motto in which he presents this, his first serious literary effort, shows that his state of mind was anything but blindly buoyant. It is taken from Newman's *Idea of a University:* "Alas, what are we doing all through life, both as a necessity and duty, but unlearning the world's poetry, and attaining to its prose? This is our education as boys and as men, in the action of life or in the closet or library, in our affections, in our aims, in our hopes, in our memories."

He dedicated his book "*To the Catholic Youth of Ireland, in whose future our highest interests are involved.*" The inscription reveals his aims and his hopes. That he was resolved to continue the subject, to carry on the battle in behalf of Catholic education to the very end by means of his pen, is evident from the words that follow the dedica-

tion: "These few pages — a prelude to deeper and diviner things," and from the closing sentence of the volume: "The End (is not yet)."

Before looking about for a publisher Father Sheehan deemed it advisable to submit his manuscript to the judgment of Matthew Russell, S.J., who had hitherto encouraged his literary efforts, not only by publishing occasional verses and short stories from his pen, but by putting him in communication with other literary people. Among those whose attention had been attracted to the fine thought and literary finish of the verses with the initials signed *P.A.S.*, was Mother Austin, superior of the Sisters of Mercy in Alabama, America. As the author of a Life of Mother Mary Katherine McAuley, and a number of historical papers in English and American magazines, she enjoyed the reputation of possessing discrimination in literary matters. In a letter from Killowen Father Russell writes of her:[1]

MY DEAR FATHER SHEEHAN,

Your American admirer (she has often spoken of you in her letters) is the Reverend Mother Superior of several convents of Mercy in Alabama and that part of the United States of America. Her usual address is

MRS. W. A. CARROLL,
Convent of Mercy, Selma, Alabama, U.S.A.

She is a clever woman, Mother Austin — and very kind besides, and large minded, and fond of literature. She is a great friend of my sister, Mother Baptist of San Francisco.

Write a nice letter to Mother Austin at once. It will give her great pleasure.

I have at last found my copy of Francis Thompson's Poems. Do you want them? Certainly the current *Edinburgh Review* has raised my opinion of him.

I wonder who will Geoffrey Austin's publisher be?

Ever yours affectionately,
MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

[1] The letter head is a print of a quaint chapel building, under which is written: "Where I used to serve Mass fifty years ago. M.R."

Father Russell approved of *Geoffrey Austin*. But who was to publish it? There were a number of respectable Catholic firms in Dublin that might be disposed to take up the manuscript. Eventually the Messrs. M. H. Gill and Son undertook the publication, and the volume appeared before the end of 1895.

While awaiting the public verdict upon his literary venture, Father Sheehan labored assiduously in the improvement of his parish. His people were for the most part farming tenants. Amid the agrarian troubles and the general political discontent he found it necessary to familiarize himself with the economic and domestic conditions of his people in order to act as intermediary and frequently as peacemaker. For this purpose he had to visit the homes of the farmers, attend their meetings, and confer with the more influential men of the district. There was a considerable number of children in the several schools of the parish which also claimed his immediate care. Altogether he found a good deal of work at his hand; and, while he felt that he was free to carry out the schemes of reform with which his mind had been filled during the years of his missionary work as curate, not a few obstacles presented themselves to their immediate realization.

Whether he had anticipated the failure of his first book or not, the disappointment came. For nearly two years the edition lay on the bookseller's shelves. The critics at home admitted the literary merit of the volume, but resented the faultfinding with a system of Catholic education that had been in vogue from time immemorial without ever provoking adverse comment. What was good enough for the old people ought to be good enough for the young generation who had no experience. Evidently the reviewers in Ireland restricted the survey of their educational responsibilities to what had been approved by the experience of the past. In England the book was practically ignored — perhaps on general principles; and, besides, it had the handicap of anonymity.

By way of compensation the story gained some appre-

ciation abroad. The *Catholic World*, of New York, gave a favorable notice of *Geoffrey Austin*, admitting it to be the work of a brilliant tyro who saw things in a true light, though he betrayed his youth by the superabundant wealth of his imagery and vocabulary. "Were it not for this feature," wrote the critic, "we might be tempted to think that *Geoffrey Austin* is the work of a skilled and matured literary man."

Father Russell, writing from University College, Stephen's Green, Dublin, calls his attention to this critique:

> . . . *The Catholic World*, the big New York magazine of the Paulist Fathers, understands Geoffrey Austin's point of view better than your other critics. I will send it, probably not until Tuesday.
>
> If you feel inclined to defend your novel in *propria persona*, our columns are always open to you.
>
> In February I supply the blank in "Sentan the Culdee." It may make readers turn back to the greatest poem of our whole career. What about the series thus brilliantly begun?
>
> Ever yours affectionately,
> MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

Other voices, here and there, added their note of praise. But the result was far from what might have been expected, considering the character and purpose of the volume. Singularly enough the book found at once a favorable response in Germany. This was due not so much to an appreciation of its literary excellence as rather to the fact that the author had incidentally struck a note in accord with certain pedagogical prepossessions in the Fatherland. Reference has already been made to the fact that discussions had been going on in German academic circles regarding the limitations of religious instruction in the Gymnasia and Universities. There had been disputes as to the preferable method of theological training; namely, whether it should be incorporated in the regular university courses, or in separate seminaries conducted according to the principles of the Council of Trent. Perhaps Father Sheehan had

been influenced in his opinions by a knowledge of these facts. At all events, a translation of the book was announced in Germany before the author's name was actually known to his readers, generally, at home.

Meanwhile Matthew Russell kept on urging the author of *Geoffrey Austin* to write. He wanted him to write more short articles, over his full signature — also to print his sermons and lectures. Speaking of an address on "Optimism" which was subsequently printed in the *Irish Monthly*, he writes:

> You will have no difficulty in putting together a new Lecture, and it is a good thing to force you to do so. Very many of your sermons ought to be transcribed and sent as articles to the big American *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* (27 West 16th Street, New York), or *The Catholic World* (120 West 60th Street, New York), or *The Ave Maria*, Notre Dame, Indiana. Get as much of yourself into print as you can and as speedily as you can.

Encouraged by these and similar suggestions, and sustained no doubt also by the enthusiasm begotten of confidence in his mission, he followed the advice of his Dublin mentor. The intercourse with his parishioners rather added fuel to than hindered his literary activity. He had now reached that stage in his command of language, and in the habit of subordinating his reflections and observations, at which expression becomes not simply a pleasure but a sort of necessity. As a result the thoughts that crystallized within sought utterance either in the pulpit or through the pen.

What time he could spare from his pastoral duties was next devoted to the sequel of *Geoffrey Austin*. Probably the doubtful reception accorded to his first book caused him to modify his theories; perhaps it also suggested the title *The Triumph of Failure*. What he strove to demonstrate was that moral or religious training must be the groundwork of the intellectual structure in education, in order to foster the growth of character which alone leads to real success in the struggle of life. Hence it was, he

maintained, the duty of Catholic educators not only to insist upon giving the first place to Christian Doctrine in all our schools and colleges, but so to leaven their classical and scientific teaching as to make the secular branches of learning contribute to the exposition of the Christian religion. In other words, he wished to show that the true value of such studies as that of the Greek and Roman classics lies in making them illustrate the worth of *natural* religion as a basis of *revealed* truth. Paganism, or whatever is admirable in its laws, its science, and art, must be regarded simply as material for emphasizing the excellence of Christianity. Geoffrey Austin's entire career was meant to be an illustration of the utter helplessness, spiritually, of a youth issuing from college and facing the practical problems of life, unless he could add the interpreting light of the Christian faith to a comprehensive knowledge of history, literature, mathematics, and physics. That was the conclusion to be drawn from *The Triumph of Failure*.

The manuscript was completed by the beginning of 1898.

Before giving the copy to a publisher Father Sheehan submitted it to Matthew Russell for comment and correction. How his friend attended to the matter is shown in the following:

86 STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN, *August* 25.

MY DEAR FATHER SHEEHAN,

I have galloped through your chapters a little more rapidly than I began. You must have been amused at the useless minuteness of my comments; but that is my proof-reading instinct — I sometimes correct a printed book. In these last chapters I have quietly changed *left them in*, into *let them in*, and in *ask them go away*, I took for granted you omitted *to* unwittingly, not intending an American peculiarity.

Your little bits of description as in the page 11 of Chap. IX are very good, and all the better for being so carefully restrained. But did you mean *eyes* and *eyes* to come so near in the next page line 7?

Gwendo*line* and Gwendo*len* — you use both forms. Give some general direction to the printer.

Why did Leviston preserve all those letters in Chap. X.?

Charlie Travers' peroration is splendid: I will use it next summer in introducing "The Two Standards."

St. Ephrem will be a revelation to many. Work at such sources, not at Kant.

I wonder is your evidence on the Will case taken legally.

How dare you put a note of exclamation after *yes?*

Your characters use Christian names perhaps too much. After the Trial would Austin call Mr. Deane *Hubert?*

In the Trial Austin is Collector at —— Hall; but in several other places Leinster Hall is named. Was it in working order in 187–? I think it was perhaps late in the 'Seventies.

Would imprisonment for contempt of court involve such consequences as in Chap. XVII?

But I am ashamed of having helped to keep this beautiful book a day more from the printers. Please God, it will do plenty of good and lead on to even better things. I am not sure that the translations of some of the chapter-mottoes would not do better without the originals.

The preaching parts are the best, I think, and the most interesting.

I am impatient to read it all in type, which is pleasanter even than your excellent manuscript.

Take care of your health. God wants a good deal from your voice and pen.

Dr. Kolbe is anxious to hear what is thought of his paper on Shakspere's *Julius Cæsar* in the *Irish Monthly* for September which will reach you soon.

Ever, dear Fr. Sheehan,
Yours affectionately
MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

The volume was nearly twice the size of *Geoffrey Austin.* As the latter had not found a very ready welcome in Ireland, Father Sheehan looked for a publisher in America, the land of free speech, and without traditions to hamper a fair valuation of what he contended for. Here, too, were his own countrymen, with a much broader outlook, and with no less sympathy for the progress of national independence at home. He believed that they would understand and second his plea for the things that contribute to the higher education of youth in the mother country.

With this hope he sent his manuscript to a leading publisher in New York. After four months it was returned to him with a polite note to the effect that the novel was not available for publication — it was "too voluminous." No doubt the American publisher was well informed as to the slow sale of the author's first book, and felt the risk of undertaking to print the sequel.

III

FAVORITE THEMES

MEANWHILE *Geoffrey Austin* had been given a lengthy and favorable notice in the *Ecclesiastical Review*. That was in 1897. Having obtained from the Messrs. M. H. Gill and Son in Dublin the address of the anonymous author, the editor had written to Father Sheehan:

Gresham Hotel, Dublin,
July 19, 1897.

The Rev. P. A. Sheehan, P.P.,
Doneraile, Co. Cork.

Reverend and dear Sir,

Having read with much pleasure your book "Geoffrey Austin — Student," and judging that the proposed succeeding volume, of which you give an intimation, is likely to bear some relation to ecclesiastical education, I take the opportunity of asking you to consider the proposal of contributing one or more articles on this or some kindred topic to the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, of which magazine I am editor. I write this "en route," and shall be able to give you further details as to form, terms, etc., when I learn that you are disposed or free to write for us. In the mean time I would beg you to address me at the American College, Louvain, Belgium, where I hope shortly to be.

Trusting that you will find it agreeable to comply with my request, and to indicate if possible some definite subjects on which you would be prepared to write for us, I am yours faithfully in Xt.,

H. J. Heuser.

P.S. — I am sure our terms will prove entirely satisfactory to you.

A few days later Father Sheehan sent the following reply:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK,
July 21, '97.

REV. DEAR FATHER:

I am in receipt of your kind communication. I shall be very happy to correspond with your wishes. I have been anxious for a long time to get into touch with the American priesthood: and if I had had the opportunity, I should have published the sequel to "Geoffrey Austin" in America. I believe the volume (which is practically a series of essays on the futility of human sciences as compared with the great central science of the Church, linked together by a narrative) would be more widely understood in America than at home. However, as no opportunity arose which would bring me into relation with an American publisher, I have now very nearly completed arrangements with Messrs. Burns and Oates, London, for the publication of the volume, which will extend to nearly five hundred pages. I enclose a list of chapters.

I have been engaged for some time in putting together some ideas about clerical education. I have struck out the chapters and designs: and have written the first three chapters. The whole when completed will run thus: —

BOOK I

The Student

Chapt. I. Clerical Equipment: — Piety
Chapt. II. Clerical Equipment: — Culture (Philosophy)
Chapt. III. Clerical Equipment: — Culture (Theology)
Chapt. IV. Clerical Equipment: — Culture (Eccles. History).

BOOK II

The Priest

Chapt. I. The Priest as "Sacrificer."
Chapt. II. The Priest as "Custos Domini."
Chapt. III. The Priest as "Psalmist."
Chapt. IV. The Priest as "Dispenser of Mysteries."

BOOK III

The Apostle

Chapt. I. The Apostolate of Preaching.
Chapt. II. The Apostolate of the Schools.
Chapt. III. The Apostolate of the Press.

Chapt. IV. The Apostolate of Literature.
Chapt. V. The Apostolate of the Laity.
Chapt. VI. The Apostolate of the Religious Orders.

The first of these three chapters are written: which I shall be happy to submit to you whenever you come to Ireland. I could not say however in what time I shall have the whole design completed, for I have a great deal to do, both in missionary work and in literature. The volume, too, was intended primarily for the Irish Church: but the Introduction alone is affected by that idea.

I shall be very happy to hear from you again, and remain,

Rev. dear Father,
Yours in Christ,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

An outline of the contents of *The Triumph of Failure*, the publication of which had not yet been finally arranged, accompanied the letter.

As to the articles on Clerical Education, proposed by Father Sheehan, it was impossible to accept them for the *Ecclesiastical Review* because that magazine was just then running a similar series by the late Abbé Hogan, under the title of "Clerical Studies." Accordingly the editor wrote to him:

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE, LOUVAIN,
July 24, '97.

THE REV. P. A. SHEEHAN, PP.

REVEREND DEAR FATHER:

Your kind letter has just reached me. I am glad you find it agreeable to comply with my request, and that the nature of your work corresponds with the aim and scope of our Review. As we have but recently discussed the question of "Clerical Studies" (Dr. Hogan, of St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass., is continuing the topic in serial papers published at intervals) I should prefer to make selection of some of the topics which are treated in isolated chapters of your proposed volume[1] — any or all of which would be suitable matter for the current numbers of our magazine. In case you agree to let me have the ten papers (comprised in so

[1] The chapters which it was thought might be available were pointed out in a note.

many chapters) treating of the Priest as "Sacrificer" — "Custos Domini" — "Psalmist," etc., I would make the following proposition, presuming that you wish to retain the right of publishing them afterwards in book form:

That you will send us one (or more) articles every two months, you to receive two hundred and fifty dollars (in ten or less frequent instalments) according to the receipt of the papers. The publication of the articles would no doubt materially advance the subsequent sale of the volume when published, especially if that be done in the States, where the demand for such literature is quickly growing. However I shall be glad to have you write in any case, and would accede to your own terms if you prefer to make them.

Awaiting your kind reply, I am,
Yours faithfully in Xt.
H. J. HEUSER.

Father Sheehan had at the time written only the first few chapters of his series as designated, and it was never published. What I find of it among his papers is of interest as showing his views on clerical education. The MS. bears the title *The Work and Wants of the Irish Church*, and deals with equipment of the clerical student in the matter of piety and general culture. As regards the subject of scholastic philosophy Father Sheehan had evidently altered his attitude from that entertained by him during his seminary days at Maynooth. Probably subsequent study had taught him its practical value as a medium for the training of the mind.

There is an introduction to these ecclesiastical pedagogics, in which, under the title *The Isle of Destiny*, he dwells at some length upon the providential calling of the Irish race to carry abroad the faith of Christ. At the conclusion he inquires why, in the face of new dangers to religion from the insidious attacks of modern civilization, "a race, chosen by the Holy Spirit for such vast spiritual work, should be spiritually dormant in its own home." He asks whether "there are any reasons why energies so visible and far-reaching when transplanted abroad, should remain

inoperative where we should suppose they would be most highly developed."

The sad *Miserere* that crept around the Irish coast when Irish exiles were departing, has long since burst forth into a glorious *Te Deum* that is echoed from New York to Melbourne, from Westminster to the City of the Golden Gate: but why is it still but a spiritual *Miserere* at home? [1]

In eloquently pathetic words he complains of the mutilated worship in the churches of Ireland, of the gradual lessening of faith, the decay of fervor, the lowering of spiritual standards in the religious life of the country, the deteriorated morals of the larger towns, and of the fact that in many places religion in its baldest and barest forms does not touch the lives of the poorer and uneducated classes. He laments that the pure and refined lives which under happier conditions were the lot of the Irish peasantry should be considered the dowry only of a past generation.

The gentle courtesy, the patience under trial, the faces transfigured by suffering — these characteristics of our Celtic and Catholic peasantry, which elicited the admiration of even Protestant strangers, are rapidly disappearing under the new conditions of life. The abandonment of country life, the emigration to cities and towns, the subtle influences of American intercourse — all these things are wiping out traits and characteristics that were once our happiness and our boast. The lineaments of modern Pagan civilization are making themselves but too apparent in the manners of our people, and the sweet simplicities of the past are yielding to narrower and more complex sensibilities, to curiosity and criticism and that uplifting of the heart which is the most deadly enemy to sanctity.[2]

He looks to the clergy for the remedy of this apparent deterioration.

It is a question whether the Catholic Church in Ireland is quite prepared to meet these new phases which every day will become more pronounced and defined. To many, deep lovers of that Church in its past history and its present environments, there

[1] From the MS. [2] *Ibid.*

appears to be a sad lack of organization, an unconsciousness of present possibilities and future dangers, and a want of correspondence with the magnificent opportunities which the innate piety and faith of our people afford, which augur badly for the future, and which may yet lead to recrimination and regrets. Above all there is a waste of energy that finds its result in tepidity, laxity of morals amongst the people, indevotion, impiety in conversation, irreverence in the young, irreligion amongst the older members, and a total absence of the "higher sanctity" that might be expected to be general among a people so highly dowered by nature and grace.[1]

His appeal is therefore to the priests of Ireland, whom he urges to realize that "the old order changeth," calling for adjustment in the attitude of the leaders of the people.

Some of us, not altogether dreamers and idealists, believe it quite possible to make the Irish race as cultured, refined, and purified by the influence of Christian teachings as she was in the days of Aidan and Columba; and we look forward to the time when Ireland, emancipated from the vexatious and harassing conditions of the present, shall become a powerful factor in that war between the Church and the world which is becoming more keen and intense the more Protean the forms in which the infidelity of the latter reveals itself.

But to carry out this high destiny, Ireland needs above all the services of a priesthood, learned, zealous, and disciplined into the solidarity of aim and principle, which alone can make it formidable and successful.[2]

If Father Sheehan proposed to point out the defects and to suggest remedial measures in the educational system of the theological seminary, it was in no spirit of criticism or conscious personal superiority.

No one could be more keenly alive than the present writer to the self sacrifice, the devotion to duty, the fidelity to their flocks, which have always characterized the Irish priest, and which were never more clearly manifested than in the crucial trials of the last ten years. But we think, with all diffidence and humility, that

[1] *Ibid.* [2] *Ibid.*

the system at present in operation in the Irish Church needs revision and amendment; and it is hoped that the suggestion made here may stimulate those in whose hands God has placed the power of reformation and reconstruction to modify and organize on a healthier plan the principles that at present are guiding the Irish Church.[1]

That is the thought that runs through these essays — a call to the clergy to rise to their high responsibility by making their people at home patterns of moral and intellectual achievement, such as their native gifts and inherited graces of faith warrant. The accomplishment of this design called for elevated standards and new methods of ecclesiastical training and these he ventured to propose.

Early in 1898 Father Sheehan wrote a paper on the "Value of Literary Criticism."[2] Possibly he was endeavoring to revenge himself on his critics who had thus far attended chiefly to his shortcomings.

DONERAILE, CO. CORK,
March 3, '98

REV. DEAR FATHER,

Some months ago you were kind enough to request some contributions from me for your magazine. I have had neither health nor time to do much since; but perhaps you would allow me to make my debut in your journal with the enclosed paper on "The Higher Criticism."

I have personally only too much reason to be thankful for my treatment by yourself in your critique of "Geoffrey Austin" last year. But I think and feel that we are too prone to admire everything that comes from the opposite camps of infidelity and heresy, instead of assuming the efficiency of the vast forces at our disposal.

It is quite possible however that this paper may not, in some respects, meet your views. In that case you would do me a great favour by returning the MS. as I rarely keep copies of what I write.

I am, Rev. and dear Father,
Faithfully yours in Xt.
P. A. SHEEHAN, PP.

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] *Ecclesiastical Review*, June, 1898, p. 591.

The article referred to points out that "a critic serves a most useful purpose in wisely discriminating between the valuable and useful elements in literature." His first principle in selecting for commendation a Catholic book should be the reverse or rather the direct contradictory of the old scholastic maxim *Bonum ex integra causa: Malum ex quocumque defectu*, a perfectly healthy axiom in moral science, but a vicious and pernicious maxim in criticism. He shows that Catholic critics on the whole have overlooked the good to be found in Catholic writers. He instances Francis Thompson, who had at the time been noticed only by Coventry Patmore and Wilfrid Meynell, and who was then wearing out his genius in writing little prose sketches for the *Franciscan Annals*. Another writer whom he mentions as an example of neglected talent is the Reverend Dr. William Barry whose *New Antigone*, published shortly before, evinced a high order of literary talent, though it fell short, among Catholic critics, of the sympathy it seemed to merit.

Next Father Sheehan intimates that the trend of modern writing is toward adopting the novel or story as the best and most attractive vehicle for teaching, not only morals and history, but science as well. He believes that if Buckle, Newman, Ruskin, and men of their genius had been in their prime during the last few years, they would have chosen fiction as the means of putting forward and popularizing their favorite theories. He argues, in fine, that the world of to-day should be taught Christianity through the medium of attractive imagery rather than in the didactic language of the old schools. And he urges the critics to help the writers who adopt this method and to cease picking flaws. He characterizes negative criticism as being either hyperaemic or anaemic; doing good to neither reader nor writer.

While thus absorbingly active in his own projects Father Sheehan did not fail to send a cheerful godspeed to his fellow workers in a kindred cause. His old schoolmate, William O'Brien, who had entered Parliament some fif-

teen years before, when barely past thirty, had not allowed his literary gifts to lie idle. He had just at this time written a political novel, *The Wreckers*, of which he had sent an advance copy to his friend at Doneraile. Father Sheehan's acknowledgment reflects not merely a genial appreciation, but incidentally his own mental attitude toward the subject of English misrule in Ireland.

DONERAILE, CO. CORK
April 30, 1898

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I deferred writing to thank you for the great favour done me by sending me an early copy of your new novel, until I should have had the gratification of reading it, and telling you what I thought of it. I have now gone carefully through the chapters; but last night I had to close the book at the 21 Chap. "The Wreckers" quite overpowered me by the dramatic intensity of the description. I am not acquainted with any chapter in fiction that equals its dramatic force. It challenges comparison with the famous storm scene in "David Copperfield," which culminated in Steerforth's death; but the latter is easy reading. "The Wreckers" cannot be read without great nerve tension.

I think you have produced a memorable book. It is your greatest step towards realizing the vocation that many have foreshadowed for you — that of being the "Walter Scott" of Ireland. What will strike every one most in the book is its peculiarly Gallic flavour. You did a wise and artistic thing in giving the Irish expressions as they occurred and inserting the Irish *idioms* in the dialogue. But it must have cost you immense study — in history and in language. It is a grand Irish novel; and will be taken to the hearts of the people. But it is all so pitiful, so sad — the eternal story of Irish trustfulness and English perfidy. You have done justice to Sir John Perrot — a figure almost too much neglected in Irish History. I hope you will deal yet with my deceased parishioners, Edmund Spenser and Raleigh.[1]

There will be a peculiar attraction for the book just now, as it calls up so powerfully our past relations with Spain. And a very

[1] This is Sir Walter Raleigh (Ralegh), friend of Spenser and associated with the latter during his sojourn in Ireland.

large percentage of our countrymen cling to these conditions, and give all their sympathies in the present war[1] to our old ally.

With most grateful thanks for your kind remembrance, and with all good wishes for your future, fraught with such vast consequences to Ireland, I am, dear William,

Yours affectionately,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

[1] Spanish-American War of 1898.

IV

THE GENESIS OF "MY NEW CURATE" AND ITS RECEPTION

IN accepting Father Sheehan's article on "Literary Criticism" mentioned above, the editor of the *Ecclesiastical Review* had taken occasion to suggest "Clerical Types" as a theme for his pen.

OVERBROOK, *March* 15, 1898.

DEAR FATHER SHEEHAN,

. . . Last year I proposed to you to write some papers on Clerical Training. Not hearing from you, and seeing in the mean time some articles in a lighter vein over your name, I concluded that you had abandoned the project of the series; and since I have material from writers here on the same subject, I am satisfied.

But I can make another offer to you, if agreeable. We want a series of papers entitled "Types of the Catholic Priest": "My Pastors," "My Curates," etc. These are to be sketches of character and priestly life, written in a mingled vein of humor and serious thought. Where they happen to point out any weak phases, it should be done in a way which could not possibly wound, though it might suggest correction. If you do not find such writing to your taste, could you suggest to us some one who possesses the talent to portray men, and describe their doings in the parish, in the home of the priest, the church, etc., in company with his brother priests, etc.

Awaiting your reply,
I am faithfully yours in Xt.
H. J. HEUSER.

The following was his answer:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK,
April 2, '98

REV. DEAR FATHER:

Many thanks for your letter and enclosure. I quite approve of your change of title in my paper. I had adverted to it, but I thought to give the paper a catching title.

In reference to your suggestion that I should write a series of papers on clerical life, it is rather a curious coincidence that I had already in my portfolio ten chapters on clerical life in Ireland, which I had purposed to develop into a volume. They were intended, however, for popular reading: and my thought was to introduce my own ideas, suggestions, etc, under the sugar coating of a story. I venture to send you these chapters. It is quite possible they will not meet your views, in which case I would thank you to return them.

Should they be considered suitable for your paper, then I could easily divert them from the original purpose, and make the remaining chapters more closely indicative of clerical studies, duties, etc.

In any case it was my intention to offer the papers as a serial to some Catholic magazine.

With very many thanks,
I am, dear Rev. Father,
Yours in Christ,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

I think Wilfrid Meynell, editor of the London *Weekly Register*, will be interested in the paper on criticism. He always notices your *Review*.

I suppose I have to thank you also for the fact that *Geoffrey Austin* is about to be translated into German.

Shortly after the foregoing letter, Father Sheehan sent his manuscript. That was the beginning of *My New Curate*. The first instalment appeared in the May issue of *The Ecclesiastical Review*.

No one but an editor can know the peculiar thrill which answers the receipt of a manuscript that promises to make "a hit" with his readers. He feels that not only has he acquired a good thing, but that he is, in a sense, the producer of it; he has discovered the mine that holds the precious ore. And there is further the enjoyable consciousness that the treasure brought to light by him is sure to give widespread intellectual pleasure, and a happy expectancy for what each new instalment of the story may bring. The sense of satisfaction is enhanced when the work has the quality of originality which is likely to preserve it

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

for generations to come. This story promised to be a valuable and an altogether new departure in ecclesiastical literature.

Father Sheehan had sent ten chapters, as a beginning of the proposed serial. Five of these pictured the pastor and his new curate, and the description was most attractively true to life. With the sixth chapter the story began to take on the character of a Celtic romance, by introducing a witch, supposed to hold intercourse with the fairies and to control certain evil spirits. It dealt with a phase of popular superstition unfamiliar to most readers outside Ireland, although in the mind of Father Sheehan the subject happened to have a special apologetic value. Witchcraft, though banished from popular belief on the continent for nearly two centuries, had taken tenacious root in parts of Ireland.[1]

The well-known case of the burning of Bridget Cleary at Ballyvadlea as late as 1895, in which nine persons were tried at Clonmel for complicity in causing the death of a young woman, under the superstitious belief that she had been carried off by the fairies, and that an evil spirit had been put in possession of her body, was demonstration of the continuance of this superstition. Contemporary journals had charged the clergy with having failed to crush out this species of "ignorance and superstition gathered round the Druidical or Danish rath." Our author wanted to show that the Catholic clergy was entirely opposed to such a practice. Beyond this it was his purpose to eliminate the abuse from among his own people.

As the application of the argument was not likely to be

[1] Mr. St. John Seymour, a Dublin clergyman, has since published a history of *Irish Witchcraft and Demonology* (Hodges, Figgis and Co. 1913), in which he traces its origin and practice. Whilst he shows that "Ireland had been unjustly stigmatized as a barbarous and superstitious country," he instances examples of witches being tried and convicted there, and allows that the custom of designating persons as fairy witches has taken on new life in modern times, among the ignorant and the superstitiously inclined, who frequently have recourse to the most absurd devices for the cure of particular ills, or even the infliction of malicious injuries upon others.

understood by the reader unfamiliar with conditions in Ireland, the five chapters in question were returned to Father Sheehan with a statement of the objection and a request, if possible, to modify the presentation of the matter accordingly. His reply was:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK,
May 6, '98.

REV. DEAR FATHER:

I enclose corrected proofs. I received your letter and check (50 dollars) for which accept my thanks. The MS. registered came to hand also to-day, with proofs.

My original idea in writing those papers was to ventilate my own ideas on purely ecclesiastical subjects. Then I changed the plan and introduced a little romanticism. Now that you have kindly taken up the papers, I revert to the first design; and will make these papers of Irish life at the same time sermons in miniature.

I have rewritten, therefore, the remaining chapters, leaving out the romance — the story of the witch, etc. I have retained the chapter, or rather parts of it, called "The Great House," and renamed it "At the Station." I have also retained the chapter "Our Concert" which is drawn from actual experience; and in which I desire to show what could be done in Ireland if we only wished. I have rewritten the chapter on secret societies, and have added two new sketches, "Severely Reprimanded" and "A Lesson in Resignation."

I have expunged all the rest, and confined the chapters to a priest's daily experiences in Ireland with all classes. I think you will find this satisfactory; but of course you can best judge what is suitable for the majority of your readers.

If you have any suggestions to make as to the course which these papers ought to take, I shall be most happy to accept them, so far as I am able.

I shall send remaining chapters in a few days.

Thanking you very much for all your kindness,
I am, dear Father,
Yours faithfully in Xt.
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

The original title of the series had been changed to *My New Curate*. Since the author had been reluctant

to write over his name, the story was announced with the subtitle "Stray Leaves from an Irish Parish Priest's Diary."

Three weeks later he wrote:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK,
May 28, '98.

MY DEAR FATHER HEUSER:

I send you by this mail, leaving Queenstown tomorrow, Sunday 29th, four chapters of "My New Curate." I sincerely hope they will please you, and reach you in time for your July number.

I am glad you have preserved my anonymity, although my friends here have guessed at once the author.

I would hardly care to write those papers, if I could not make them edifying as well as amusing: and it is therefore a source of great satisfaction to be assured by you that they must do good. I hope I shall succeed in not making my teaching too obtrusive.

You will see that I have altogether eliminated the romantic, and cut away all my descriptive passages, which to an author is equivalent to a surgical operation. I have introduced Campion, for he belongs to a class that is likely to give trouble in Ireland. In most of our towns professional men have great difficulty in approaching the sacraments; and I want to show Father Letheby's success there.

The *Station Picture* and *Our Concert* are drawn from life. Each has its own moral, that of the latter being — the ease with which village choirs may be organized, as I shall show in succeeding papers. The *Severely Reprimanded* speaks for itself. I enclose syllabus of succeeding chapters that you may know the drift of my work.

My great difficulty is to draw from life, and yet avoid identifying any character with living persons. And we are so narrow and insular here in Ireland that it is almost impossible to prevent priests saying: "That is so and so," "That is Father ——," etc. But I shall steer clear, without wounding charity.

I shall leave the correction of proofs in your own hands. A printer's mistake is of no consequence.

I hold a short tale on hand, called *The Monks of Trabolgan.* It was sent back from "The Catholic World" on account of its length (32 MS. pages). It would suit your series of papers as

My Curate's First Essay in Literature. With many thanks for all your kindness,

I am, dear Father,
Yours in Xt.
P. A. SHEEHAN

P.S. What enormous difficulties lie in the path of Catholic writers. I committed a typewritten copy of *The Triumph of Failure*, the sequel to *Geoffrey Austin* to . . . New York four months ago. They have now written to say it is too voluminous for publication. It would form a very modest volume of about 350 pages. I am writing for the typewritten copy by this post: and shall now publish at home.

The story of *The Monks of Trabolgan* was not utilized for *My New Curate*, as its author had intended. After having been declined by the editor of the *Catholic World* it was offered to Father Thomas Finlay, S.J., for *The New Ireland Review*, which had been merged with *The Lyceum* founded by him in 1887. Subsequently the story was withdrawn, as the following letter shows, by the advice of Father Russell, who suggested some revision. Ultimately it was published by the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland. Recent events of the war have given it a special significance.

86 ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN
Feb. 7

DEAR FATHER SHEEHAN,

Father Tom Finlay demurred a little when I demanded *The Monks of Trabolgan*, but, knowing the congested state of his storehouse, I insisted on restoring it to you with a view to possible changes. I wonder, when it finally appears, will those hexameters survive. I still hold that a man with any taste for Latin verse would not make such impossible ones.

Ever, dear Fr. Sheehan,
Yours sincerely,
MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

Father Sheehan inclosed a syllabus of the succeeding chapters of *My New Curate*, as he states in his letter of May 28th, given above. The titles differ from those in

the story as finally arranged. The latter ran to thirty-three chapters, the last of which appeared in the September number of the *Ecclesiastical Review* for 1899. As originally projected, the chapters, beginning with the tenth, ran as follows:

Chapt. X. "Over the walnuts and the ——" (A conversation on fraternal correction, Greek, preaching, the temperance question, etc.)

Chapt. XI. "Beside the singing river." (Secret Societies destructive of religion.)

Chapt. XII. "My Madonna." (A little pathos about one of the school children: and the use of charms in Ireland.)

Chapt. XIII. "Larry McGee." (My curate's attempts at church improvements. His annoyances, etc.)

Chapt. XIV. "Winter Studies." (The philosophy of the Tramp world.)

Chapt. XV. "The Captain Campion not at his Christmas duty." (My Curate's conference with him.)

Chapt. XVI. "Christmas Morning." (The *Adeste* by the new village choir.)

Chapt. XVII. "My Curate on Literature."

Chapt. XVIII. "The May Conference." (Gives the programmes, etc., of our Irish conferences; and how Father Letheby startled the Conference by his vehemence.)

Chapt. XIX. "The Star of the Sea" is launched. (Great Success — Troubles.)

Chapt. XX. "The Factory Opened." (Great Success — Troubles.)

Chapt. XXI. "An Eviction."

Chapt. XXII. "Father Letheby Bankrupt." (His final success.)

Chapt. XXIII: "The Bishop's Visitation."

Chapt. XXIV. "I get the Mozetta, and my curate is promoted to the Cathedral."

The author's desire to remain anonymous arose not merely from sensitiveness to publicity, but from unwillingness to encounter criticism similar to that which had been passed upon *Geoffrey Austin*. But the identity of the writer of *My New Curate* could not long remain a secret; and

gradually he began to realize that the vast majority of his readers were delighted with his excursions into Irish pastoral preserves. From time to time the favorable criticisms which appeared in the American press, and some private letters from men whose judgment he was sure to value, were sent to him.

All are pleased with your happy delineations of priestly life, and with the sparkle and literary finish that characterize them, to say nothing of the graceful touches of your fine whip which finds the sensitive spot to urge or check. Let me add that these papers will do exceptional good, not only because they foster a healthy tendency *excelsior* in various ways, but also because of the form into which the lessons have been cast through your ingenuity will cause them to be read. When the *Lettres d'un Curé de Campagne*, by Querdec, appeared some years ago, I anxiously scoured the land to get something similar in English. The subsequent volumes from the same source increased this desire. Now you have just struck the vein which suits the majority of our readers. I wish you were familiar with American modes and models of pastoral life, so as to continue the work indefinitely on kindred lines when you have done with *My New Curate*.

There were, however, a few critics. Some even of those who were amused and edified by the story winced at the author's references to certain defects among the clergy and people in Ireland, and which they took to be a reflection on the national character. But the ever increasing popularity of the story made it quite evident that these defects, if such they could be termed, were outweighed by the good points of the story. At this the author seemed greatly pleased. On June 19, 1898, he writes:

I am much gratified at the enclosed slips — "Laudari a laudatis" is always very pleasant; and I think a good deal of Dr. Stang's and Fr. Hogan's appreciation . . . I also have to thank you for the cutting from the *Literary Digest*. I showed it to Fr. Matthew Russell, S.J., editor of the *Irish Monthly*, who was staying with me at the time. It is a curious fact that Fr. Russell

and Fr. Finlay, S.J. came simultaneously to the conclusion that the *New Curate* was my work, from purely internal evidence.

I had also had the pleasure of receiving the congratulations of Bishop Brady of Boston, who was in Clare with me, and to whom Fr. Hogan revealed the authorship. His Lordship said that his assistants read the numbers eagerly.

If there are any subjects on literature, poetry or philosophy, that you think could be made suitable for your readers in the form of articles, I shall have some spare time, I hope, during the winter months, and I might take them up. I have an article on "Priestly Culture" nearly completed. It was one of a series I projected. It deals with the importance of the study of philosophy. But, I suppose Dr. Hogan (whose papers are learned and attractive) holds the field there.

P.S.—I send you a photo that you may know to whom you are writing.

Occasionally Father Sheehan, asking that some alterations be made in his MS., indicates his anxiety to avoid the criticisms mentioned above:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
Sept. 10, '98.

There is just one paragraph in the chapter "Beside the Singing River" of the wording of which I am not quite sure. I think it commences: It was a magnificent leap of imagination on Father Letheby's part to connect Jews and Freemasons with etc., etc.

What I intended to convey was (1) that, as in Europe, so in Ireland, anti-Catholic journals are run by Freemasons and possibly Jews:

(2) That Jewish and Freemason firms in these countries do a large business in manufacturing and selling devotional objects, beads, scapulars, etc.:

(3) That Jewish peddlers through the country are often agents for the sale of pornographic literature.

It was not my meaning to connect this latter business with the newspapers in Dublin or in Ireland.

Would you kindly modify or omit? These papers are attracting a good deal of attention in Ireland: and I see the necessity of being very accurate and circumspect in what I publish, especially as I cannot see proof.

Yours very sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

When eventually the author of *My New Curate* was being everywhere heralded as a genius who had introduced a new type into English literature, the question of the authorship began to be openly discussed. As it became gradually known that the writer was the parish priest of Doneraile, congratulations poured in upon him, and he was being called upon by visitors at home, and more especially from the United States, Canada, and Australia. The clergy of his diocese were feeling a sense of pride in the acclaim that greeted one of their fellow priests. "The Bishop," he writes, "is taking round with him the May number, and reading it at the Visitation dinners here in Cloyne."

His friend, William O'Brien, on his way to Malta, writes:

MY DEAR FATHER PATRICK,

I cannot resist the temptation to write you a line to let you *know how far the fame of "My New Curate" has extended.* The Bishop of Mauritius, Dr. O'Neill, who, in spite of his name, has never been in Ireland, is on board and he told me that your book was the delight of many a lonely hour in his exile, and was also read and re-read a dozen times over by the four or five Irish priests who have established themselves in his diocese. The rewards of Irish authorship are not so numerous that one should be deprived of the pleasure of knowing how far the influence of your charming story has made itself felt. It is something very different indeed from vanity to have the consoling knowledge that you have been the means of giving so much delight to so many of your countrymen, and have been, so to say, in such intimate communion with the spirit of our race. I find my own feeling shared everywhere that the curate for all his perfections is not worth the hem of the surplice of his less enterprising but oh, so much more Irish and more human old P.P.

Although the public outcry for "More" is often one of the penalties of writing a successful book, I hope, and indeed am quite sure, that the pen which gave us "Father Dan" will not rest before making another rich addition to our not too splendid national literary possessions. I am sure you will be glad to know that the sea trip thus far has served me vastly, and that I have hope of returning in completely restored health.

With every good wish, always your old friend and schoolfellow,

W. O'BRIEN.

Mr. O'Brien was quite right. The author of "Daddy Dan" was not to rest before making other rich additions to the national literature of Ireland. Father Sheehan had in the first instance taken up his pen from the conviction that that little instrument is more powerful than the voice. "It lasts longer and reaches farther. The littérateur is a greater power than the politician. He inspires the latter, and outlasts him." As a proof he used to quote the fact that it was by his writings that Rousseau precipitated the French Revolution and survived it; and he was fond of saying that of the two great Englishmen, Newman and Gladstone, the former would still be an active and perennial force when men shall remember the latter but as a name. Moreover he was convinced that moral teaching lasts longer than intellectualism, and is far more fertile of good. "Supreme intelligence does not win humanity." For this reason he not only made writing a part of his daily occupation, but urged the same habit on those whom he was able to influence. He did not believe that literature should be cultivated for its own sake, as an art, or that it was an inviting field for a career.

All successful writers are unanimous in warning off young aspirants from the thorny path of literature. Grant Allen would give them a broom and bid them take to crossing-sweeping. Gibbon, de Quincey, Scott, Southey, Thackeray, — all showed the weals and lashes of the hard taskmaster. Amongst moderns Daudet warns that brain work is the most exacting of all species of labor, and must eventuate, sooner or later, in a bad breakdown; Mr. Zangwill says somewhat grandiosely: "Whoso with blood and tears would dig art out of his soul, may lavish his golden prime in pursuit of emptiness; or striking treasure find only fairy-gold, so that when his eye is purged of the spell of morning, he sees his hand is full of withered leaves." And dear old Sam Johnson, who certainly passed through his Inferno and Purgatorio before he settled down in the comfortable paradise of Streatham, epitomises his hardships as author in the well known line:

"Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the gaol." [1]

[1] *Under the Cedars and the Stars*, Part II, c.

He knew others, however, who managed to make fortune if not wealth out of their literary pursuits — such as his favorite, Jean Paul, who saw in poverty but the pain of piercing a maiden's ears that you may hang the precious jewels in the wound. Similarly he appraised Balzac, whose struggles and the agonies of ill-spent genius became the occasion of a most touching sympathy, as revealed in the letters of his sister Laura. On the other hand he instanced Rénan, with whom literature and the influence of a sister were for evil. His judgment upon Pascal as a disappointed littérateur is original and interesting:

The verdict of a more enlightened age than ours will be that Pascal was no sceptic, though a bold enquirer; that his marvellous mental keenness and vigor were only equalled by his rigid asceticism; that nature had made him pious, and circumstances made him proud; that his "Thoughts" which reveal to us his inner life are beautiful and deep beyond words; that they would have even the color of that inspiration which comes from nature and grace united, were it not for a dark shadow which stretches itself over all, making the philosophy of them less clear, the truth of them less apparent, the study of them a task of anxiety and suspicion, instead of being one of edification and delight. When the *Provincial Letters* are forgotten or neglected as splenetic sarcasm, and have passed away like the Junius and Drapier Letters, or have become but the study of the connoisseur, his *Pensées* will remain broken fragments of an incomplete but immortal work. [1]

The serial *My New Curate* was gaining in popularity as it was drawing to its completion. The Irish bishops were commending it to each other and to the clergy.

DEAR FATHER SHEEHAN,

Dr. Keyes O'Dogherty, Bishop of Derry, was here yesterday. He told me that he had dined lately with the Bishop of Liverpool, Dr. Whiteside, who spoke of "My New Curate" as the best written and most interesting thing of the day. Dr. O'Dogherty got all the numbers from some priest and then wrote to Dr. Whiteside that he agreed with him. The Bishop of Derry did not know

[1] *Ibid.*, CIV.

it was you till I told him. A good omen for "The Triumph of Failure."

Ever yours sincerely,
M. RUSSELL, S.J.

As Father Sheehan had intimated that he would have in all probability some leisure to write during the winter months, a new serial as a continuation of the experiences of Father Letheby, under the title "My Old Pastors," was proposed to him by the editor. It would give the reverse of the medal, and leave room for further discussion of the exploits of the curates. To this he replied:

With regard to your suggestion of attempting a new series under the heading "My Old Pastors," I can see no difficulty about it, except that I am pressed for time. I think I could continue the series, as you desire, introducing them with a note from the clerical executors of Father Dan to the effect that they have rushed these foregoing papers through the press because they heard that the Rev. Charles Letheby was about to issue a series of papers entitled "My Old Pastor," and they thought it best to let Fr. Dan speak for himself first. This would introduce the new series by the Rev. Charles Letheby: and I could bring in a good deal of my experience in English missions.

V

"THE TRIUMPH OF FAILURE"

IN November of the same year, 1898, *The Triumph of Failure* was published by Messrs. Burns and Oates of London. Naturally Father Sheehan was anxious about its reception. He was now satisfied to have his name attached to his writings, for the popularity of *My New Curate* had removed the apprehension of further criticism.[1] Father Russell, as usual, was ready to see that the book should get due notice from the men of the press. In November he writes:

Nov. 8, '98.
ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN.

MY DEAR FATHER SHEEHAN:

. . . I hope your novel will find kind and gifted critics. We must take pains to get it reviewed (and I have never yet thanked you for your fine Cork review of St. Joseph of Jesus and Mary).

You spoke of using my cheque as the price of certain copies. If you do not let it stand as part of your next remittance, let it procure us plenty of presentation and review copies, and bid Burns and Oates send to yourself as many as you are likely to be able to utilize for these purposes. Even a country newspaper's review is far better than an advertisement which costs a good deal and which few read.

Miss Katherine Conway of *The Boston Pilot* comes to Morrison's Hotel, Dawson St., to-night, en route from Rome to the Hub. She will be here for ten days. She too must review *The Triumph of Failure*. When will it be out? No sign of Rosa Gilbert's *Nanno*, though in type this month or more.

Yours ever affectionately,
M. RUSSELL, S.J.

[1] About this time the hitherto anonymous edition of *Geoffrey Austin* was reissued with a new title page bearing the author's name.

Again, a month later:

86 St. Stephen's Green,
University College, Dublin.
Dec. 18.

My dear Fr. Sheehan,

Though I am "out" since Friday, I have had a great accumulation of business to get through and I have done hardly anything for *The Triumph of Failure*. I gave a copy to Mr. Wm. P. C. whose review will appear in the *Freeman's Journal* very soon, perhaps tomorrow. I gave a copy to Thomas Arnold to-day when he brought me an interesting letter from his daughter Mrs. Humphrey Ward about Mr. Charles Water's criticism of *Helbeck of Bannisdale*. She accepts many of his criticisms as fair. I will send her *The Triumph of Failure*.

You speak of Dr. Wm. Barry and Mr. F. Egan of the Catholic University, Washington. Have you sent them copies? You ought, and with letters.

I will ask you — but no, it will be enough for me to get from the publishers a list of the review-copies sent out. In supplying other journals besides, you and I would not, I think, look in the same directions. Miss Katherine Conway of the *Boston Pilot* would be one of my selections.

The Academy always puts before its *Brief Mention* Notices an announcement that fuller reviews of a selection of these books will be given hereafter. Your book is announced as A Story of strong Roman Catholic interest. The hero writes towards the end: "I am writing these memories . . . the white, stained face of my Mother."

I am sure you will get a long notice hereafter. They gave me a very fine review this week of *Nanno*, with a beautiful picture of Lady Gilbert, though they had given before a short notice like yours.

In great haste
With best Christmas Wishes
Yours affectionately
Matthew Russell, S.J.

As a matter of fact Miss Conway did not review *The Triumph of Failure*. "It was too high for me," she wrote; which probably meant that she did not think it reached up to the standard of *My New Curate*. She wrote to Father

Sheehan telling him that she believed his particular talent as a writer lay in his candid revelation of the English-speaking priest. She thought his pen was needed in this particular field because it was unique therein. To her frank charge he replied that he had been tempted to abandon the portrayal of clerical characters because many amongst his friends and acquaintances had set themselves to identifying from his contemporaries some of the men who figured in his books. It troubled him; he feared to give pain, and he was almost, if not quite, persuaded to write no more in the same line. In reply she argued that the suggested identifications were only proof of the life-like qualities of his priests.[1]

Father Russell again takes up the subject of *The Triumph of Failure* in the following:

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

MY DEAR FATHER SHEEHAN,

Mr. Coyne told me to-day that he had at last arranged with Mr. Brayden to be the *Freeman* reviewer of "The Triumph of Failure." Mr. Robert Donovan had undertaken it. He is a good writer but dilatory. Mr. Brayden will warn him off.

Fr. Henry Browne, S.J., of this house (who has always admired "Geoffrey Austin") has written a wonderful study of the new book which has been offered to Dr. Hogan for the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*. No time for an answer yet — unless it came this evening. If not accepted, I will send it to John J. O'Shea for the *American Catholic Quarterly*.

Fr. Browne is going to Castle island, Fermoy, and Buttevant in the next few days, and may cross your path.

In great haste,
Yrs. Aff'ly,
M. RUSSELL, S.J.

The promised reviews did not all turn out to be favorable to the author.

[1] Some of the appreciative criticisms of Miss Conway's books in Irish journals are from Canon Sheehan's pen.

ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.
Jan. 3, 1899.

MY DEAR FR. SHEEHAN,

God bless you for that best of Christmas boxes, a renewed subscription to *The Irish Monthly*.

I am very glad you have the humility and good sense to take in good part such criticism as William Coyne's. Dr. Barry's in *The Catholic Times* will serve your book immensely. It can hardly be in the issue printing or printed at this moment — from the manner in which he speaks of it in his letter of this morning. He repeats to me all the praise that you shrank from reporting.

I will ask from Burns and Oates the names of the 15 American journals supplied with review-copies, that I may ask Miss Conway of the *Boston Pilot* to watch them. She herself must write a full review.

Burns and Oates did not supply *The Independent* — yes, they supplied *Nation* and *Irish Catholic*, not knowing perhaps that they have the same office and staff. I have just written, therefore, to Mr. D. to poke him up; and I have sent a copy to Mr. John O'Mahony (of Cork) to review in *The Independent*.

At Mr. Gill's and also at Clery and Co.'s I was told the book was selling well.

Ever, dear Fr. Sheehan,
Yours sincerely,
MATTHEW RUSSELL.

Will you take Fr. Hudson at his word and send a paper to the *Ave Maria?* They pay.

How hopeful he was at this time as to the reception of *The Triumph of Failure* in America may be gleaned from the following letter:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
January 7, 1899.

MY DEAR FATHER HEUSER:

Your letter just to hand, with enclosure. Very many thanks for all your kind and encouraging words, which are a powerful stimulus to fresh exertions. I am quite disappointed to hear that my book has not yet reached you . . . I am happy to say it is attracting some notice at this side. All the papers have been very kind, and extended articles will appear in the *New Ireland*

Review, the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, etc. Dr. William Barry, of Dorchester, Oxford, is taking it up warmly, and is writing a long notice of it. But I look to America for the success of the book.

Father Sheehan was much encouraged by the sympathetic appreciation of his friend Canon William Barry. In a letter of December 28, 1898, Dr. Barry, after reading *The Triumph of Failure*, wrote from Dorchester:

Long before I had reached the end it was clear to me that no book of anything like the importance which yours may claim, had appeared from Ireland for years.

I wrote this morning *The Catholic Times* proposing a long review (signed) which I begged them to put in a prominent place. This, I am hoping, will be out next week; and the American papers are sure to copy or give extracts. It is hard to know what one should attempt with non-Catholic magazines. But somewhere an opening must be found . . . Of course the secularist instinct, now widespread, is likely to put editors on their guard against so downright a Catholic treatment of your subject. They will stand anything as literature; religion is another story.

Dr. Barry confesses that he had not yet read *Geoffrey Austin*.

It is a sin which can be atoned for; and I shall soon know all about Geoffrey; and your loveable and truly Irish Charlie who will be henceforth a friend of mine . . . Helen Bellamy says with terrible exactness that Irishmen have no imagination. I have thought they had no power of setting down on paper what you describe as "introspection"; that they could shoot and drink and joke and make love and say their prayers and be very delightful; but as children they dream; and don't know that they dream. Your touching story is a dream; but conscious of itself — not self conscious. I should be doing it wrong to treat it as empty literature. There are words on some of its pages that come home to me, and express certain intimate feelings vividly as I know them; and what more could the supreme poet achieve? I mean poet in the most serious sense — *vates*, the prophet that teaches in music . . . but, as I say, it is the hardest thing in the world to conquer the steep escarpment which you have chosen.

He adverts in particular to Father Sheehan's citations from St. Ephrem's Homilies which Father Morris had rendered admirably, and ends:

> Confirma hoc, Deus, quod operatus es in nobis — that, my dear Father, is the prayer I put up for you and myself from a heart as Irish as is your own, and with feelings of hope and thankfulness.

In his article for *The Catholic Times* Dr. Barry calls upon Irish and English Catholics to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the moral of the book."

Whilst *The Triumph of Failure* was an accepted success as a novel it did not escape severe, if discriminating, criticism in so far as it proposed theological reforms. Some of these came from not unfriendly sources. Father George O'Neill, S.J., writing in the *New Ireland Review*,[1] contended that the stress which the latter had laid upon the paganizing tendency of the study of the old classics was somewhat overdrawn. He maintained that the essential Catholic atmosphere, at least in the Irish colleges, acted as a sufficient antidote to any serious harm that could result from the study of the old models of rhetoric, even if the teacher failed to point out the contrast between them and Christian doctrine. In a letter of February 7, 1899, Father Russell bids the author "not to take Father O'Neill's review too seriously. I think it will do us good instead of harm. I will not say a word to him about your letter. He says strong things in your favor."

Abroad, the book was everywhere well received. The *Indo-European Correspondence* of Bombay had an exceptionally flattering review; and "some Berlin publishers," writes Father Sheehan, "are negotiating for a translation."

Some critics have thought *The Triumph of Failure* the best of Canon Sheehan's literary efforts. He himself inclined in that direction; though there were times when he thought otherwise. There is no doubt that he took more

[1] Father O'Neill, S.J., author of *Ireland the Teacher of England and Scotland*, later on became a great admirer of Canon Sheehan's literary genius.

pains with its literary workmanship than he did with any of his other books. The story in union with *Geoffrey Austin* has two concurrent morals. It pleads for the infusion, as has already been said in speaking of his first book, of more religion into our classical and professional studies. And it shows also the influence a child may exercise upon the formation of a man's character and entire life. As Dickens appeals most to our sympathy through child characters like Little Nell, Little Dorritt, Florence Dombey, so Father Sheehan rivets our interest in these two stories by making the two figures of Little Ursula and Charlie Travers shine forth, as if woven into it with threads of gold. For the sake of making clearer Father Sheehan's ultimate purpose in all his subsequent pedagogical work, I may here summarize the plot of the story that runs through these two volumes:

A young lad, anxious to make his way in the world, is sent by his guardian, who is at the same time his parish priest, to a private Catholic school in Ireland. Here he is to be prepared for the English Civil Service examinations. The boy is impressionable, talented, high-spirited, and inclined to assimilate the ideals, particularly of the Greek and Roman classics, set before him by his teachers. Although he completes his course at college with credit, he fails in the Civil Service test. Thus he finds himself unexpectedly without any definite aim in the struggle for existence.

It is at this stage of his life that we meet the youth in the opening chapter of *The Triumph of Failure*. He has secured board and lodging in a back room of a snug little house in one of the suburbs of Dublin. A mental audit of his personal condition reveals to him the following:

> To my credit I could place youth and strength, a splendid constitution, a fairly liberal education, a love for learning, and 80 pounds, the balance left after my expenses in Mayfield and London, and which my guardian sent me, at my own request, on my return after my failure at the Control examination. On the debit-side could be placed the dismal failure, the cause which led up

to it, my utter inexperience of life, and a disposition very prone to extreme and abnormal depression, or the reverse. I should add to my credit account a small but select library; to my debit-account, alas, a faith and religious feeling theoretically intact, practically shattered and undermined.

Next he records his first experience in the effort to obtain suitable employment, the cold-hearted and professional indifference to his condition in a world which he had entered with buoyant hopes. "It was with a sinking heart, after a few dismal failures, that I put on my overcoat one morning, drew on my faded gloves, and stepped into the dripping streets in search of some decent employment that would merely yield me a competence." The rebuff he meets with in a large mercantile establishment where his appeal to his having enjoyed a liberal education, as a qualification for a sales-clerk, is derided in the midst of sneering employees, is a revelation which sharply wounds his vanity and leaves him utterly despondent. "I went home, but I could not rest there. I took up my favorite philosophers, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. Their poor platitudes irritated rather than soothed me." He goes out again into the streets, angry with himself and with the world. Stopping at a bookseller's window he mechanically leans on the brass railing and looks at the titles of the books, reading in them nothing but hostility to mankind and the bitterness of revenge.

Thus I raged, leaning on one hand my burning forehead, the other hung dead at my side. I heeded not the stream of people that swept by; I saw but my passion and revenge, when something soft and warm stole into my hand and rested there. I turned round and saw a little girl, who was not more than four years old, looking wistfully into my face. Her hand still nestled confidently in my own.

"Please, sir," she said, "take me home."

She was a dainty little woman. A small oval face was lighted up by two dark brown eyes, where the peace of heaven shone; and her black hair, with some curious streaks of red or purple gleaming through it, fell in even curves upon her temples. She

was well dressed, and a dainty little sealskin cap (which I still hold, and which I would not part with for all the diamonds of Golconda, and which shall be buried with me wherever it pleases God my remains shall be laid) rested lightly on her white forehead. I know not what she saw in me to seek my confidence, for I am sure hell was pictured in my face. But then angels are not sent to angels. Even in this, God's eternal law, the law of contrasts, which is the law of love, was maintained.

But a miracle was wrought in me. What all the pagan philosophy of Greece and Rome could not bring about, the faith and confidence of that little child effected. . . . Even so the touch of that little hand swept from my soul the foul fiend that possessed me, and I resumed in one moment a tranquillity and peace to which, for the last two days, I had been a stranger. I closed my hand gently over the soft, warm fingers.

"Come, little one," I said, "we will go home together; and you shall lead me."

All through his subsequent life the recollection of little Ursula's face remained the guardian of his nobler nature. He does not very long enjoy her sweet prattle, for the child soon after dies. The scene of her death is described with exquisite pathos. Her spirit hovers about him, for she had promised him in her innocent simplicity that she would come back to tell him all about heaven.

"And, Mamma," she said, making her last will, "you'll dive Doff my — my prayer book and my beads; and — and — "

The little mind was wandering now, and my heart was tugging away, like a wild beast in its cage. Good God! What a load of sorrow lies on this weary world! . . .

I remained in the house that night. There was no sleep for them or me. When morning came Ursula was better, and I went to work with a light heart. But all day long, as I bent over that weary catalogue and marshalled those dreary ill-smelling books, the thought of the little child choking to death, overcame me, and my tears fell fast and free on the page . . . At six o'clock I was scudding across the city, with hope fighting in my heart against desperate forebodings of evil. There was a deeper hush on the house when I entered — the indefinable silence that means but one thing. The angel of death had come and stood by the

Angel of Sorrow. Yes, I needed not the tears of the sorrow-stricken mother, nor the blank white face of Hubert Deane, to know that the child who had rescued me from sin, and who had been sent from heaven to teach me some of the deeper meanings of life, was now resting on a safer and sweeter bosom than mine. I saw her — and if I am not profane, I envied my God His treasure — on the bosom of Him who had said: Suffer the little children to come to Me. The little face was waxen, and showed no trace of the agony which my pet had suffered. The waxen petals of her fingers were intertwined, and her rosary, my rosary now, was woven between them.

Time cast Geoffrey's lot in rough places during the subsequent years, and taught him the weakness of that support which his own pride and his pagan philosophy had pretended, but were not able, to bring him in his hour of need.

Amidst his deepest degradation he unexpectedly comes in contact with a former fellow student, Charles Travers, who has embraced a career of self-sacrifice in the cause of moral reform, similar to that which Ozanam and the founders of the St. Vincent de Paul Society had inaugurated in France. Geoffrey compares his own life with that of his friend. The difference is one of day and night. He is forced to reflect and inquire into the causes of this contrast, and finds them to be, not accidents but principles. Austin feels gradually stealing over him the influence of the wonderful power exercised by Travers, whose habits of life had been directed by a deeply spiritual-minded priest, Father Aidan. This priest, having found in the youth the instinct and courage to follow the higher path of renunciation, strove to develop all that was strong and holy in the young soul; and to harden and anneal as by fire all that was weak and sensitive. Then came the time for action, and suddenly, before men were capable of realizing whence the energy proceeded, Charles Travers showed that he was capable of subduing and swaying, by his eloquence and direction, the destinies of thousands, and to impart to their souls that peace which is to be found only

in self-sacrifice. Travers dies at the very time when, after seeming failure and unrequited struggle, the work he had fostered has reached its zenith of success. He takes no part in the triumph on earth, whilst the fruits of his victory are being reaped by others.

It is the last of many proofs which Geoffrey had witnessed, that the triumphs of the saints, the triumphs of religion, though failures often enough in the eyes of the world, are real and lasting, whilst the victories of science, of civilization, of society, are only apparent or temporary, and afford no genuine basis of peace even in this world. Success is not the mark of progress.

And so, running like some secret magic through all human history, inexplicable, powerful, elusive of all human efforts to analyze it, compelling an unwilling admiration, or extorting an unreasonable fear, potent for good, destructive of evil, the spiritual essence and mission of the Church unfolds itself. And whether seen in the quiet life of some such saint and apostle as Charles Travers, or exhibited on larger lines in some great evolution that touches the sympathies or awakens the fears of men, the same uniform and unvarying issues startle the world into a momentary faith in the supernatural. For on no other ground can it interpret or explain that which is known in Christian history and ethics as the conquest of the learned by the foolish, of the powerful by the weak, of the great ones by the little — in a word, that apparent defeat which has marked all God's dealings with His world through His Church, which in reality, as time develops His designs, is seen to be perfect and ultimate victory; and which therefore we have ventured to designate — The Triumph of Failure.

Geoffrey Austin himself learns the lesson well. He eventually seeks a success that knows no disappointment, and goes in search of peace such as the world cannot give — in the cell of the cloister. There we leave him happy, as a priest in the service of God and his brethren.

It is a beautiful story, told with all the literary grace, vividness of scene, and wealth of scattered erudition gained from the author's study of the classical writers. Father

Sheehan shows clearly, and with great felicity, that, to educate youth for actual life, it is not enough to fill their minds with knowledge and with admiration for classical learning; but that, if the teacher would uphold the tradition of pagan ideals, old or new, as models in education, he must make these ideals instinct with the religious spirit that gives them true life and not merely antiquarian record-value.

VI

"MY NEW CURATE" APPEARS IN BOOK FORM

TO return to *My New Curate*, which had meanwhile run on serially to its conclusion in *The Ecclesiastical Review*. In October, 1899, the editor was able to assure Father Sheehan that "there will be no difficulty about finding a publisher for *My New Curate*. . . . If you paint the sequel, *My Old Pastors*, in the same colors, we shall have two books for the clergy, containing the sum total of Pastoral Theology in a form that is not only *illuminans intellectum* but (what is not done by the ordinary text-books) *movens voluntatem*." Again in December he was informed:

AMERICAN ECCLESIASTICAL REVIEW,
OVERBROOK, PA.

December 29, 1898.[1]

DEAR FATHER SHEEHAN,

My New Curate has now become the talk here everywhere among the clergy (and a good portion of the laity who keep in touch with matters ecclesiastical). I hope that you will, now that we have found you out (and introduced your pleasant self to the sanctum of the *Eccl. Review*), remain thoroughly domesticated. Indeed nothing delights me much more than the reflection that I once forecast — from the evidence offered by *Geoffrey Austin* — your strong points with absolute fidelity, as demonstrated by present results. The last time I was in Belgium I was much in company of one of our most cultured bishops from America. One day I handed him your volume, saying: If this writer were to select clerical types for his story, he would inaugurate a new and most fruitful departure in Catholic literature. . . . I propose to ask Longmans, Green, and Co., here (of the London and Bombay firm) to publish your book and will let you know what they say as soon as I can make some headway. . . .

[1] Marked by Canon Sheehan, "Received, Jan. 7, 1899."

It was only to be expected that he would be delighted with all the success that made him a thousand friends, as it were, overnight, whereas he had been ignored a little while before. Although he gave full expression to this satisfaction, he reflected on the conditions which put a Catholic author at the mercy of seeming accidents. If Father Sheehan enjoyed his triumph, it did not alter his philosophy that success is not the sign of progress. The man who sets out to labor for the salvation of souls may not always divest himself of the vanity which causes him to relish human applause. None the less he will not make popular favor the standard of his judgments and appreciations.

But there was another consideration that tended to keep his spirit humble. It arose from the fact that his literary success belonged to a sphere which he considered secondary to that of his duties in the sacred ministry. Writing was a mode of preaching; but apart from this it was a mere recreation with him. If success in this sphere pleased him, it also called forth reflections that aroused a new sense of responsibility. He wrapped up the glory of his new-won literary fame and laid it away, as did old "Daddy Dan" when he put by the robes of his canonical dignity.

As his first serial drew to a conclusion, Father Sheehan began to prepare the sequel. This was to embody his experiences on the English mission at Plymouth and Exeter. It offered new material, not merely in point of priestly activity, but in different characteristics and scenes of land and people.

DONERAILE, *March* 13, '99.

MY DEAR FATHER HEUSER,

Most grateful thanks for your letter and enclosure; for the extra numbers you have sent me; but above all for your kind, encouraging words, which are worth more than gold. Your critique of my book was admirable. Altogether I have reason to be most grateful. Your remarks about Dr. Barry have been echoed here by very many gifted and holy priests . . . He is

supporting his church and mission by his pen, and just now he is threatened with a bad breakdown in health and must go abroad. I have written to him strongly urging him to take up the line of Christian apologetics; but he answers: who will read him in the department. Yet as in the case of the "Two Standards" he is able, by Protestant sympathy, to get an edition of 4000 copies off his hands before it is in print. I assure you (comparing small things with great) my experience is almost similar. For the years I was writing for the *I. E. Record* I never received one word of encouragement. You and my dear friend Fr. Russell are the only priests that have ever said a kindly word of my work hitherto. Now I am on the full swing of the tide; and my last book has made me a thousand friends. But it was weary work; only I felt that I was working for our Lord, and He would reward me. And He has, a thousandfold. But venturing into the field of Catholic literature is a greater risk than many are aware of; and many a writer can say, as Dr. Barry says, "aquae inundaverunt animam meam."

Probably I shall stretch out *My New Curate* a few chapters further than I intended; as I want to make the end interesting. And then, with your permission, I think I shall be able to open a new series entitled:

YE SHEPHERDS

BEING THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE

this time to be told in the third person, and commencing with experiences of English missionary life. Probably I could give you the first chapters for September. You may of course have a more attractive series to offer. I hope you will. But you will let me know in time.

I am happy to know that our good nuns are reading my papers. . . .

And now thank you again for all your kindness, for your spirit of enterprise, and I hope under heaven that you may be the means of inaugurating quite a new era in Catholic literature.

I am, dear Fr. Heuser,
Yours always in Xt.,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

A month later he writes:

BRIDGE HOUSE, DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
April 5, '99.

DEAR FATHER HEUSER,

I forward by this mail (Sunday 7th) the final chapters of *My New Curate*. I hope you will find them a worthy termination of the serial. I ran the XXX Chapter so far — 18 or 19 pages —that I was obliged to pull up the last abruptly. Yet I like closing a story with a certain amount of dramatic action.

I also forward printer's proof of first eighteen chapters, corrected for press. Should you think advisable to give English translations (as footnotes) of the Italian and Latin quotations, it can be done. As to the illustrations, I have been looking for photos that might suit Father Dan and F. Letheby; but none comes up to my ideal. And I find that most readers here will be difficult to please in that matter, where faces are concerned. Scenery of course is easily managed; and there could be a few sacred pictures, suggested by the allusions, here and there in the book.

I am just recovering from a sharp feverish cold; and much debilitated.

Always gratefully,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

In a postscript to the above letter he adds:

I have a lingering hope that some of your young priests may take up the syllabus of subjects (given in the March chapters) metaphysical and historical; and build up articles for you, the same as I have suggested for Father Letheby, which eventually would form a comprehensive library on these important subjects.

Father Charles J. Kelly, D.D., diocese of Scranton, Pa., called a few days ago to see the author of "Daddy Dan."

Some days later he writes:

You have taken a great deal of trouble about my book; and I cannot see that I can do better than leave the matter unreservedly in your hands. It would be quite impossible for me to form an opinion so far away from the center of action. But it seems to me that M——'s offer should be accepted, unless some other, more advantageous, were offered before publication. The only person whom I consulted about the matter here thought that it would be

better to retain the copyright, and arrange only for edition by edition; but I dare say the publishers would not stereotype under these conditions. . . .

In a few days I shall forward the remaining chapters (of the proof sheets for the printer of the book). This will leave me free for evolving the ideas of "Ye Shepherds."

Should good fortune waft you to this side during the coming summer or autumn, I shall take it for granted that you will pay us a welcome visit here.

I am, my dear Fr. Heuser, with many thanks,

Yours sincerely.

P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

With regard to the publication of *My New Curate* in book form it seemed that the author's rights would be better guarded in the hands of a reputable publisher than in his own.

Accordingly Father Sheehan was advised to sell the copyright for his first popular book; for as he was prepared to write a good deal more, the experience would guide him after that in following the better course. In later years he found it to be to his advantage to sell his copyright, and the Longmans have since then published nearly all his books.

As appears from the following note Father Sheehan definitely decided to sell the copyright under the conditions offered.

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
May 3, '99.

MY DEAR FATHER HEUSER,

I am in receipt of your letter and enclosure (£ 12.) for which accept my hearty thanks. In a higher degree I feel intensely grateful for the last words of your kind letter, assuring me that our little serial has gone home to the hearts of the American priesthood, and that its lessons are likely to fructify there. The same mail brought me a letter from far Melbourne, assuring me of the same thing. And I feel very humble, and most grateful to our dear Lord that He has chosen such a weak instrument for so great a work. As to secular fame, I should hardly value it; for one is always tempted to cry:

Vanitas vanitatum.

But to have spoken successfully to my dear brother priests, and to have won their affectionate sympathy, is a reward I have never dreamed of expecting, and which is very sweet and consoling.

When Mr. M—— writes, I shall tell him he can have the copyright, as I don't care to have too many burdens; and in this matter of copyright and royalty, I shall accept his terms, already offered.

Let me add that your *Review* has earned unstinted praise (or shall I say its editor) on this side of the Atlantic for its enterprise in rising above the usual leaden level of Catholic magazines. It is a tremendous lesson to many of our home journals.

I shall gladly accept any hints as to the future series which you may be pleased to offer; or the line I should follow. My Melbourne friend suggests the imperfections and drawbacks in clerical education, but I feel the subject is overdone, though I have a few papers beside me on the subject.

With all gratitude and good wishes,

I remain, my dear Father Heuser,

Yours in Xt.

P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
June 30, 1899.

MY DEAR FATHER HEUSER:

The American mail leaves in a few hours; so I am snatching a brief moment to thank you again for all your kindness.

We go on retreat tomorrow; and then I go to England for a brief holiday.

As I said before, I felt quite humbled and ashamed at all the praise my few papers have received. But my reward lies not there, for I know only too well what a passing thing is human praise or blame. But I feel great gratitude toward our Lord for His having vouchsafed to use me for His own sacred cause; and it is a large and generous reward to be assured, as I have been assured so many times, that I have earned the good will and affection of the American priesthood, whom I have always revered since I had the happiness of meeting some of them, during my curacy at Queenstown. This week again Fr. Yorke of San Francisco has been saying kind things of me in Maynooth; and yesterday I had a charming letter from one of your best contributors, Fr. Bruneau, asking permission to translate my books into French.

But assuredly all this would have been impossible if I had not had the good fortune of having you as sponsor. No magazine at this side of the Atlantic would have published "My New Curate." They are all old-fashioned and conservative, forgetting that the Church must move with the age and that

"The old order changeth yielding place to the new."

But I think your enterprise and the success that has attended it, have caused some heart searchings here in Ireland.

I shall certainly write a preface to the book; and introduce my obligations to the *American Ecclesiastical Review* and its editor. I have written to Mr. M—— accepting his terms, saying that he can have the copyright also. I do not see what use it could be to me, unless, like Rudyard Kipling, I should have to buy it back at a big price in future years. The formal agreements promised by Mr. M——, I am expecting by every mail. The book will have a large sale here. I have forwarded to Mr. M—— a book of sketches and some loose photographs for his illustrations.

I had been thinking of asking you to commence the new series in January 1900, instead of next October, partly because it would synchronise better with dates, and partly because I am sometimes hard pressed with work. But I have refused to entertain any proposals until the series "Ye Shepherds" has been ended in your magazine. Let me know what you think. Of course I can supply you with copy for October in case you thought it advisable.

I shall be very much pleased if Mr. M—— and myself can become permanent friends, as we shall be. I am very anxious to bring out a volume of sacred poetry next year; and our publishers here are slow and unsatisfactory.

I am so sorry I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you face to face this autumn. Perhaps the Fates will yet be kind and let you come. I have a large house and garden, in a very poor village; but the country around is beautiful, and a few weeks here would send you back rejuvenated and refreshed to your desk. May it be so.

Again with all thanks,

I am, my dear Fr. Heuser,
Yours in Xt.,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

In compliance with Father Sheehan's wish, the appearance of the new serial was deferred to the following Janu-

ary, 1900. He had in the meanwhile refreshed his memory by revisiting the old scenes in Devonshire. His ideas, too, as to the best manner of presenting the subject of his missionary experiences had changed, and the title of *Luke Delmege* was to be substituted for that of "Ye Shepherds."

Though his name was very well known by this time it was deemed desirable for the nonce to keep up the pretense of anonymity. The preface to *My New Curate*, in which the author proposed to express his acknowledgments to his American readers for their ready appreciation of his work while it had appeared in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, did not arrive in time for the first edition, and was never published. Meanwhile numerous were the inquiries whether the author of *My New Curate* was going to continue writing. Readers wanted more of "Daddy Dan" and of Letheby, who, after becoming a P.P., must surely have got the purple robes which the Canon had promised to keep for him. Other questions related to certain details mentioned in the novel.

These questions were soon disposed of. Father Sheehan replied to some of them privately; others *e.g.* "What was the Kampaner Thal?" were answered through the pages of *The Ecclesiastical Review*.

The Kampaner Thal is a treatise on the immortality of the soul, by Jean Paul Richter. It is a journal supposed to be kept by the author during a tour in France, and purports to detail certain conversations between himself and a wedding party which is making its way to a baronial castle in the Pyrenees. The party make a pedestrian tour through the *Kampaner Thal* (The Meadow Valley), and at the different halts in the journey the dialogue is sustained by the author; Carlson, a sceptic; the Baron Wilhelmi; Gioné, his affianced; and Nadine, her sister. The romance is said to have been suggested to Richter by some doubts, expressed by some ladies of his acquaintance, about their future immortality. It deals with the all-important question from the standpoint of experience and reason and the eternal fitness of things, and argues largely from that intuition which is ever so dear to a poet. Hence the treatise is remarkable, even beyond all Richter's other works, for picturesque descriptions and those practical analogies and

images in which he had no equal. A sequel named *Selinda* deals with the same question from another standpoint — that of philosophical investigation as distinguished from mere feeling. The book undoubtedly, if not the greatest, is one of the most interesting of the voluminous works that issued from the pen of this difficult and delightful German author.

Matthew Russell sent to Father Sheehan some suggestions by way of criticism that should prove useful in a new edition of *My New Curate*. Referring to the character of "Alice" in the chapter "Madonna mia," he writes:

"Dr. Brendan MacCarthy (son of the poet Denis Florence) says you should not have made that good girl suffer from polypus but lupus or cancer. Polypus is the most curable of diseases, and the symptoms you describe belong to something far worse.

"Dr. MacCarthy thinks you run down our poor people too much. Scott idealized his countrymen and raised the appreciation of Scotland abroad. My friend whom I like so much — Mrs. Francis Blundell — vexes me in some of her Irish sketches with the tone she adopts towards her humbler characters. Kate Douglas Wiggin, a clever American, wrote two charming, bright, witty books *Penelope's English Experience* and *Penelope in Scotland*. I only read the second, and I liked it greatly. But now comes out *Penelope in Ireland*. It is a very poor book, and while pretending to be good-humored it is offensive.

Mr. Justice Madden is an ardent admirer of *My New Curate* and its author. [1]

He also tells Father Sheehan what Joel Chandler Harris (Uncle Remus) wrote to one of his daughters who was at an American convent school: "I am glad your teacher enjoyed the book *My New Curate*. It is a piece of real literature, and it is the finest book I have read in many a day."

Among the criticisms that gave due emphasis to the distinctive features of *My New Curate*, the following from the late Michael T. Duggan, one of the leading contributors

[1] The Hon. Dodgson H. Madden, Attorney General and M.P., was also Vice Chancellor of Dublin University, and interested in Canon Sheehan's educational schemes for Ireland. He is the author of the *Diary of Master William Silence* — a Shakesperean study.

to the *New Ireland Review* and some English periodicals, deserves mention here:

188, CLONLIFFE ROAD, DUBLIN.
7 *April*, 1900.

DEAR FATHER FINLAY,

I have read with great delight Fr. Sheehan's book *My New Curate*. It is simply superb; it is a long time since I read anything so good. I think it shows the possibility, the practicability of dealing literally with Ireland and her people, and with at least as much advantage if not with quite as much success, as Scott did with Scotland and her people. The interpretations of Irish life we have been accustomed to have almost invariably been distorted renderings and gave us a part (and that exaggerated and travestied) and called it the whole.

The supernatural shines vividly through almost every character in the book, nevertheless there is not a goody-goody line in it. And every one in it is so delightfully human, with in most cases a "redeeming vice" in him or at least some frailty which makes him out to be flesh and blood.

I see from your pencilings that you have read the book yourself and read it critically (I think hypercritically). What does it matter if "our conversation wandered over the whole area of human knowledge"? Others before him have written or spoken "de omnibus rebus" or "de omni scibili." He says "Cui bono?" meaning "what's the use?" or writes *carafola*. Again, what does it matter? That in itself is a part interpretation of our very complex Irish character. We don't potter over details as a Scotchman would. The latter for instance would consult his Greek lexicon before writing or passing over in proof such a "thing" as *eikons!* But we Irish are built so. We look to the general effect but *we won't take pains*. Lever, for instance, who was a doctor and should have known some chemistry, speaks in one of his books of a valuable silver mine in Sardinia. He refers to the ancient workings of it by Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, etc. Refers to Pliny as an authority who if consulted will verify what Lever has stated! — and then goes on to say that the very lead extracted from the ore would pay the working expenses of the mine *because it was exceedingly valuable, being of that fine kind of which lead pencils are made!*

There we are in a nutshell — mock learning and shameful ignorance. That is how we appear in literature.

Now this book which is the first of Father Sheehan's that I have read has a minimum of these, while it is interesting, instructive and edifying. And Fr. Sheehan *can* tell a story and that is a gift which not one in a million possesses. The author of the *Chances of War* is another of these fortunate people and if he had a bishop we might hope to get him kept busily employed in giving us the most necessary literature to-day (after apologetics), namely, well constructed, well written, dashing, vigorous novels full of the life-blood of our people and with no taint of the *fumier* in them. The glass of whiskey to some, and the cup of tea to most, are not more craved for than the literature I speak of. God bless all who help to create it.

How to Keep Healthy, pp. 116–137 (germs, bacilli, etc.)[1] *In Kedar's Tents — very good.*

If you want *My New Curate* will you send a card? I am keeping it for a week or two (if I can).

M. T. D.

V. REV. T. A. FINLAY, S.J.,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

[1] It hasn't kept me healthy — I have that vile influenza since Sunday and am trying to put it over on my feet. Aches, pains, fever, depression, cough.

VII

"LUKE DELMEGE" AND OTHER VOLUMES

AS was to be expected, *Luke Delmege* proved to be hardly less welcome than its genial precedessor, *My New Curate*. Some critics thought Luke's character lacked the direct heart appeal that had marked Daddy Dan's utterances and ways. Others on the contrary considered the book a superior piece of work, at least in literary technique. Twenth-four chapters of the novel appeared during the course of the year 1900. This completed the first part of the story, covering Luke's experiences on the English mission; at the close of which he was bidden by his bishop to return to Ireland.

Although there was more of the story to follow, it was deemed advisable to interrupt its serial publication for some months, in order to whet the appetite of the readers. Soon these began to inquire, "What has become of Luke Delmege?" They were told that he was crossing the Irish Channel on his way to his native diocese, and that he would shortly reappear. After the story had been resumed "Luke" riveted the attention of his readers, until his epitaph had been written.

HIC · IACENT
OSSA
ADM · REV · LUCAE · DELMEGE
OLIM · IN · SUO · COLLEGIO · LAUREATI
NUPER · HUJUS · ECCLESIAE · RECTORIS
NATUS · OCT · 20 · 1854
OBIIT · NOV · 20 · 1898
AMAVIT · LABORAVIT · VIXIT
REQUIESCIT

The references to Delmege's academic attainments as "First of First," together with the inscription on his

tombstone, "Olim in suo Collegio laureati," were interpreted by some of Canon Sheehan's critics as a reflection on his old college of Maynooth. If such a thought was in his mind at the time of writing, he gradually came to divest himself of its animus. Toward the end of his life he had nothing but gratitude for those who had been at any time instrumental in shaping his career.

Meanwhile he was also experiencing some of the inconveniences of popularity.

On December 20 he writes:

Very many thanks for your letter and honorarium. I am very gratified to know that you like the new serial. I propose pointing out some of the dangers that lie in the paths of young priests abroad, especially when they begin to read or are thrown into dangerous surroundings. I shall complete the serial in five books of seven chapters each, although I may have to prolong it. Would you think it well to close the serial with the year 1900, and the nineteenth century, by giving three chapters in place of two each month? Or would you prefer to extend it over into the twentieth century? This is a matter of no consequence to me: so decide as you think right. Also, suppress my name altogether, except as "the author of *My New Curate*." It always gives me the shivers to see my name in print; and the little notoriety I have attained has been productive of annoyance rather than pleasure to me. I am dragged hither and thither by all sorts of demands; and as my health is always an uncertain quantity, I have to refuse all kinds of invitations to preach, lecture, etc.

I had a few brief words with an old schoolmate, the Rev. Morgan Sheedy, of Altoona, Pa.; he was very enthusiastic about the method, enterprise and system by which you have brought the *Am. Eccl. Review* to success.

And again a little later:

BRIDGE HOUSE, DONERAILE, CO. CORK

DEAR FATHER HEUSER,

Many thanks for Postal Order, just received. Yes, I wish to drop "Idiota" altogether. It was a mistake. I had its literal meaning before my mind; and did not sufficiently advert to its modern acceptation. If there be a reprint I shall devise some

other title or modification. Print as I wrote: Luke Delmege. Part II, Illumination.

In the XXVI chapter, "The King's Secret," there is a passage representing old Father Moore stooping to kiss the forehead of the dead penitent. I should like to change that word "kiss" to "bless," if you thought well.

I shall send the remaining twelve chapters to you immediately before or after Christmas, so that there would be time for alteration or correction. This will run the serial to September.

I think Fr. V. in November number did not understand my metaphor. Thus: —

"When he spun syllogisms (as a spider spins his webs), and drew unwary flies (antagonists) into their (the syllogisms) viscous and deadly clutches." It makes no difference however.

I am, my dear Father Heuser,
Yours faithfully,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

In another note he also suggests a correction for fear of wounding the sensibilities of his clerical friends:

In the chapter entitled "A Great Treasure" (chapt. xxvii), if you decide on retaining the Archbishop, please make him a foreign one, by the insertion of a few words.

With your large and liberal views you cannot form an idea of how easily offence is taken at this side.

With all good wishes, I am, dear Fr. Heuser,
Yours sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

For the second part of the series the term "Idiota," originally added to the title, was omitted.

The story was completed in January, 1902 and at once published in book form by the Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co. The volume got a generous welcome from the press.

About this time Father Sheehan issued a volume of his poems under the title:

"CITHARA MEA"

These verses mark the author as a bard who endeavors to solve the problems of life by the light of faith. He

divides his topic into the "Hidden" and the "Revealed." In the first part he represents himself as groping in the shadows: "And I behold thee; but oh! it is so dark." — "I heard a sound of weeping in the night." — "For what is space but one vast, black abyss." His attitude is the Faust-like search amid the teachings of the ancients for the mysteries of life: — "I ploughed through wastes of faded palimpsests."

> "At last I looked into my soul and cried:
> Thou, thou at least, canst tell me naught but truth;
> Thou oracle of God . . . "

Then gradually dawns the revelation:

> "I placed my poet against your scientist;
> I placed my prophet king against your poet."

In doing so he realizes that he has been misled. Then suddenly he hears a voice which, whilst it taunts him for his lack of faith, bids him recognize his heavenly Father smiling upon his untutored zeal and whispering to him: "Come to Me." He finds the answer to the riddle of life, and with it his

> "dream of death in waking day expires."

Besides this exposition of doubt and assurance succeeding each other, the verses contain various interpretations of sacred and profane moods. One of these, "A Nocturne," is quite novel in form as well as in conception. It presents the spirit of the poet peering into the future, and consists of twelve sonnets woven into a single theme. Other poems deal with myths and legends of the old Druid rule; and some are fragmentary communings with forgotten Celtic bards. The music throughout is in the minor key, indicating the sense of loss, albeit instinct with prophetic hope. There is a tone of refinement and an air of mystic aloofness in Father Sheehan's verse which separates it from the commonplace.

Dr. Barry, having read snatches of *Cithara Mea*, comments:

"I am touched by your letter and the sight of your beautiful volume which had come to me at this moment. On turning the leaves I catch a happy phrase or a feeling thought, and I seem to understand you even better than from your stories. That is the end of poetry, is it not? I mean: to reveal one's mind, to get a certain comfort by throwing outside of one into clear shape what one has long brooded over."

And of *Luke Delmege* he writes:

"Glimpses I have had of Luke Delmege tantalize and strike out many thoughts. Your subject is striking and unhackneyed, and full of tragic elements. I wish the modern reader would bear to be told more about a priest's life . . . "

Again:

"Your paper on Spinoza — I did not see it in full — appears to have sounded at Maynooth as a voice from unknown worlds. Yet the Irish intellect cannot forever be mewed up in such terrible commonplaces and conventionalities as it, or its phantom, submits to, there and elsewhere."

Father Sheehan is urged to go on with his poetry, though he also received occasional critical suggestions.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S, UPPER GARDINER ST.
DUBLIN, *Nov.* 8,

. . . Your Muse certainly does not seem fond of "That swallow-flight of song." The sweep of the eagle's wing is hers. You are a contrast to another poet-priest, Father John B. Tabb of the United States, who throws most of his thoughts into quatrains — and very good quatrains. The fastidious Alice Meynell herself has edited an English selection from his poems lately.

I will study all your poems carefully, with little hope that *The Irish Monthly* can claim the honour of introducing them into the world.

In some instances two sonnets form a sequence. In other cases would you allow the sonnets to be printed separately? You are terribly modern. I have studied nothing later than Tennyson except Coventry Patmore, if *he* can be called later.

The very last of your sonnets — "I asked the mountain, why art thou so dark?" — I like perhaps best of all. I hope it is a favourite of yours also.

You ought to publish a second volume of poetry. Lady Gilbert is preparing a second volume. Look at K. Tynan's six or seven volumes of verse — and very good verse.

Ever affectionately,
MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

Later the same writer returns to him a MS. poem.

Feast of St. Lorcan.

DEAR CANON SHEEHAN,

I hope "Lady Ida" has arrived safely. I made her up in an awkward parcel, to avoid folding. A very sweet poem; but, though it is a *story*, Monsignor Howley would prefer a story in prose. But you must learn to say: *No*. Don't attend to such demands which are very unreasonable.

Do your sonnets or any of them form a sequence? Must they be published in this fixed order? They are fine. But "The Palace of Sleep" at a first glance frightens one. The metrical scheme is very original, but I am not sure that it is musical. The eye is better satisfied than the ear. Your learned Muse requires study. I have hardly looked at Swinburne and the moderns, so I am an old fogey in such matters.

Very wrongly Fr. C—— took off "A Much Abused Letter" to Limerick, where he went to bed on Sunday with one of his bilious attacks. If he had given it to me, you could have finished it in a day. When he gets back to us, I will send you the ill-omened book. God help poor Fr. Tyrrell.

Ever yours affectionately,
MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

Despite his opinion that much of Father Sheehan's poetry was caviare to the general, Father Russell published in his magazine a goodly number of the verses not included in *Cithara Mea*.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S, DUBLIN.
Jan. 2, '07.

MY DEAR CANON SHEEHAN,

Let me print "Woman and Child" in February. I like Sheila's part best. I understand it. You are a terribly modern poet. I have not even read the moderns, except bits in magazines. One needs to be a poet, and a modern poet, and a learned one to boot, to appreciate duly your mystic "Palace of Sleep." The *Dublin*

Review is publishing poetry now. Your Muse is dignified enough for a Quarterly.

Ever yours gratefully,
M. RUSSELL, S.J.

Among the best things he wrote in verse is *The Canticle of the Magnificat.* It consists of a hundred stanzas of six-line pentameter verse and bears in thought and expression a strong likeness to Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven.* The poem appeared as a serial first in the *Ave Maria* and was afterward reprinted by the Irish Truth Society.

AMERICAN BAIT

It was to be expected that after the success that had marked Father Sheehan's literary work there would be enticements held out to him to write for other periodicals. This led to representations being made to him from some American publisher which implied that the author of *My New Curate* had been underpaid, and could do much better if he sought more popular mediums than an ecclesiastical monthly. These invitations did not make any impression on Father Sheehan, although he referred to them in his letters.

A species of competition, however, which was more effective was the rousing of his suspicions that *The Ecclesiastical Review* might ultimately take advantage of its preference, and retain the copyright of his books. The immediate occasion of this fear arose from that magazine's securing a separate "copyright" for each article of *Luke Delmege* as it appeared. The reason was of course plain to anyone familiar with American conditions. Since the series was to be published in book form on its expiration in the magazine, it seemed advisable to forestall the possibility of its being pirated. Unless each separate instalment bore expressly the notice that it was copyrighted, the chapters presenting isolated stories might readily be taken by some enterprising publisher and printed before legal protection for the issue of the finished volume could be

secured. In other words, it was a question of safeguarding the author's rights relative to the publication of his novel in book form. The same reasons did not exist for copyrighting separately other articles of the *Review*. As Father Sheehan deemed it sufficient cause for complaining, the following explanation is here in place.

AMERICAN ECCLESIASTICAL REVIEW
OVERBROOK, PA.

January 15th, 1900.

DEAR FATHER SHEEHAN,

I answer your letter, just now received, without delay *to remove your anxiety about the copyright.* As I pay for the articles which I request for the *Eccl. Review*, I hold according to our law and common practice the copyright for the same. The payment varies according to the position of the writer — his recognized reputation, or the labor involved, or the special character of the topic treated requiring access to documents, journeys, etc., involving separate expense to the author. For serials I pay *as a rule five pounds each article.* For single articles I have paid as high as twenty pounds. But in every case I claim the ownership of the MS., as is the practice with all our publications, apart from special stipulation. The reason of this outright purchase is — to avoid contentions with authors, in case they were to get dissatisfied with our disposition of their articles as to the time and manner of publication, and thus attempt to have them published wholly or in part through other mediums before we could issue them. Some of our publications pay only after the articles have appeared in their pages, but the above is our system, and everything is done so as to leave no obligations on our part uncovered. *But in your case, as in a few others, I made an exception from the very outset, because it seemed plain that if you were* to finish the series, it would also be published in book form and prove of financial or other advantage. Such advantage I do not *ever contemplate for the Review* [next clause illegible because written over, but I think it is "I invariably turn over to"] *the author*, who will thereby increase the working efficiency of the Catholic cause. Thus the *Review* accomplishes the primary aim for which it was established, in a twofold sense. You see that my insistence upon the copyright for paid articles means merely *protection, not the profit* that might come from *negotiating with it.* Indeed all the articles

which we retain copyrighted are worthless *to us* and any author could get them back for the asking, *when once we have published them.*

But why did we copyright your articles separately? *To facilitate your obtaining the transfer, if at the end of the series you wish to have the same published in book form.* Recently American publishers have adopted the method of copyrighting individual papers although the magazine in which they appear is copyrighted. For it was found that irresponsible parties ostensibly in Mexican and Washington Territories (although living in N.Y.) printed and published and sold at the thoroughfares pirated matter of interest, at a captious price. These publications were stamped "copyright," and a good sale was generally effected before the publishers became aware of the fraud because the *titles* of these publications were somewhat different from the original titles, and some editions had indeed two or three titles and different covers for different localities, with a view to eluding the proprietors' eye. Now, although I did not think that this would be done with your series, I felt that if any unscrupulous publisher (and we have them by the score everywhere) were to print any part of special interest from your papers, I should have no redress, even with the general copyright. . . .

Furthermore there was really some difficulty when the Government of the U. S. was asked to give the copyright over (since I had registered it) to a British subject. I sent a form of transfer to Mr. M—— which I believe he sent you for signature in which I act as your agent for the transfer to the publisher. These were my motives for registering the articles separately. It is the first series (after *My New Curate*) which, coming from across the sea, made me familiar with the possible accidents that might prevent its ready publication, etc. If you were here I could easily convince you how much I deem it a duty to protect my contributors . . .

The explanation proved wholly satisfactory. About this time Father Sheehan became acquainted with the Irish poet and novelist, S. R. Lysaght, best known probably by his political sketch, *Her Majesty's Rebels* (Macmillan). The author, then living in London, at present resides in Doneraile, and bears eloquent witness to the results of Canon Sheehan's labors in the district, as educator and

parish priest. Acknowledging the receipt of a volume of Mr. Lysaght's poems, the Canon wrote:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK
May 1st, '01.

DEAR MR. LYSAGHT,

A line of grateful acknowledgement to you for your beautiful volume just received. In the midst of great hurry I could not resist the temptation of reading through "The Undiscovered Shore." Whether in their literal or allegorical meaning the poems are very beautiful — just what I should like to have with me some warm afternoon in one of my seanooks down near Ardmore or Youghal. Of course the modern undertone of sadness runs through all, and the eternal yearning after the Infinite and the Ideal — the most touching and sad of all modern symptoms, yet one with which I, standing firmly on the shores of Faith, can readily sympathise. The great notes of triumph, like those of Dante's *Paradiso*, will yet be heard, and you, as so many others, will come into the harbour under the Great Pilot . . . I shall be looking out for the reviews on your book.

A few months later to the same:

DONERAILE, *Oct.* 1901.

DEAR MR. LYSAGHT,

After many interruptions I was able to finish the reading of "The Marplot" last evening, and I hasten to thank you for the two volumes, and for the pleasure you have given me especially by your own work.

I am not enthusiastic about "Irish Ideals." I suppose I am pretty tired of all the empiricism just now being practised on this poor country, and in which there seems to be one hopeful feature, viz. the return of alienated classes to their allegiance to the motherland . . . "The Marplot" is an exceedingly clever story. I agree cordially with one of your critics that "the descriptive passages rise to the level of genius." I would have wished for more, but I suppose you have kept that great faculty under restraint. For the first time I have come across our real Munster idioms in print. I feel pretty sure you have been pelted with countless indignant letters from young ladies for having disposed of Elsinora so suddenly and mournfully. I think the death of O'Connor, and his insane idea about the dice cast, very dramatic, and not at all beyond the reach of experience . . . I am going over "One of

the Grenvilles" again. It is an advance in many ways. You have a unique power of working out the plot of a novel. Some day you will give us a distinctively Irish Romance, but Calliope is your goddess. With renewed thanks,

P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

A NEW DEPARTURE

Whilst the chapters of *Luke Delmege* were running their course *The Dolphin* (which hitherto had been a literary supplement to *The Ecclesiastical Review*) was being organized as a separate periodical. For this purpose it was necessary to secure a fresh corps of contributors, and accordingly arrangements were made with Canon Sheehan for an extension of his contract. The following letter bears on the subject:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
June 4, '01.

DEAR FR. HEUSER,

What kind of story or novel would suit your new enterprise? I hold in the stocks two skeleton forms of stories — one, purely narrative, without any particular motive underlying the tale; the other, dealing with some complex questions about labour, etc. This latter would be the completion of the trilogy, for which *My New Curate* and *Luke Delmege* are the first parts. It is an idea of forecasting a perfect civilization founded purely on religious lines. You will notice the refrain running through *Luke Delmege* — "we must create our own civilization." I am anxious to formalize such a civilization, founded on simplicity, self-surrender; and as alien as possible to all our modern ideas of progress. You will perceive that Luke's failure sprang from his want of touch with this supernatural element.

Give me your ideas; and let me know is the enlarged *Dolphin* to be consumed by laics only; or as an occasional Sunday dinner by the ecclesiastics also?

Ever sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

The Dolphin appeared as a separate monthly in January, 1902; and the first issue contained a biographical sketch of the "Author of 'My New Curate,'" by Fr. Matthew

Russell, S.J. The article was to make the readers familiar with Father Sheehan's work in anticipation of the good things which he was sure to contribute. *My New Curate* and *Luke Delmege*, though written primarily for the clergy, eventually proved to be books much appreciated by the lay reader. *Geoffrey Austin* and its sequel now began to share this popularity.

The new story did not take shape until, apparently by accident, the material of the historic trial known as the "Conspiracy of Doneraile" fell into Canon Sheehan's hands. This furnished him with the plot for *Glenanaar*.

During the interval the author gathered into a uniform whole some hitherto neglected notes on a variety of subjects that had come under his observation. These appeared as *Under the Cedars and the Stars*, in the *Dolphin*. The serial ran for a year, the whole being grouped under four sections corresponding to the seasons of the year. There is in these detached musings a good deal of local sketching, although their main object is to reveal the varying moods of his soul life, called forth by touches of nature and of thought. Those who have visited Canon Sheehan while he lived at the Doneraile parsonage will recognize at the very beginning the description of the little enclosed garden, with its somber trees and rose bushes, of which he was so fond; and where he did most of his writing, during the spring and summer, and far into the autumn days. He speaks necessarily of himself, though with a modestly deprecating air, just as he would reveal himself to the casual visitor who knew of his work and might want to see the artist of dear old "Daddy Dan."

"This," he writes, in reference to his garden, "is its great and only merit. It is a *hortus conclusus et disseptus*. Three high walls bound it, north, south and west; and on the east are lofty stables, effectually shutting out all possibility of being seen by too curious eyes. It is a secluded spot and in one particular angle, at the western end, is walled in by high trees and shrubs, and you see only leafage and grasses, and the eye of God looking through the interminable azure. The monks' gardens bound it [this is the

Community close of the Christian Brothers who teach the boys' schools of the district] on the northern side; and here in the long summer evenings I hear the Brothers chanting in alternate strophes the Rosary of Mary. The sounds come over and through my garden wall, and they are muffled into a sweet, dreamy monotone of musical prayer. But the monks never look over my garden wall, because they are incurious and because there is not much to be seen. For I cannot employ a professional gardener, and it is my own very limited knowledge, but great love for flowers — 'the sweetest things God has made, and forgot to put a soul in' — and the obedient handiwork of an humble laborer, that keeps my garden always clean and bright, and some are kind enough to say, beautiful. And we have sycamores, and pines, and firs; and laburnum, and laurel and lime and lilac; and my garden is buried, deep as a well beneath dusky walls of forest trees, beeches and elms and oaks, that rival in sublimity and altitude their classic brethren of Lebanon, leaving but the tiniest margin of blue mountain, stretching, sierra like, between them and the stars.

"But my garden is something more to me. It is my *Stoa* — my porch, where some unseen teacher ever speaks, as if with voice authoritative. It is to me the grove of Academe. Here under the laburnum, or the solitary lime or sycamore, I walk with spirits quite as wise as those who trod the ancient groves with Plato, and questioned him sharply, and drew out his wonderful dialectical powers. But my spirits question not. They are not sophists weaving subtleties out of the web and woof of dainty words; nor do they ask 'Why' and 'Wherefore.' They only speak by their silence and answer my interrogations. For I am an inquisitive being and the mystery of the world weighs heavily upon me . . . Miracles are all round me. I have a child's wonder and a child's love."

All through these sketches are to be found personal allusions and reflections of the solitary whose habits made him unusually introspective. But they are also rich in observations on men and things, and they touch every department of human knowledge or divine philosophy. They are the meditations of a well-stored mind, the contemplations of a mystic, who looks out upon the world from his chamber above, with the light of heaven upon the things below.

Despite his preoccupations he did not forget his old clerical audience. "I shall feel quite lonely," he wrote, "when I see any numbers of the *American Eccl. Review* without my handiwork, but I am afraid your readers would now like to see new effort and a new name."

The June issue, 1902, of the *Review* contained an article — "Father Mack on Retreat" — as a timely commentary on the annual spiritual exercises of the clergy. It purported to be an incident of the retreat in which two priests are described as discussing with some animation the relative merits of present-day pastoral methods. The Bishop happens to come on the scene and shows his displeasure at their violating the silence of the retreat. But "Father Willie," who "was a young 'old' priest, fairly on in years, though always with the heart and spirits, and even the face of a boy," apologizes for the two, and captures His Lordship's good will by unconsciously revealing a singular spirit of filial chivalry toward the older man, his former pastor.

Father Sheehan had wished the story to be printed anonymously. The following letter, marked "private and confidential," shows a still lurking dread of criticism. Referring to "Father Mack on Retreat," he writes from the Bridge House, June 13, 1912:

> I expect there will be diversity of opinion about it as about my other work; but in view of the hostility that has been raised against me in clerical circles on this side, on account of *Luke Delmege*, I would urge upon you the advisability of keeping the authorship of it a secret. Attempts may be made to discover the writer; but I am aware that many would be glad to quote it as another example of my desire to lampoon and discredit the Irish priesthood. Although the verdict of the world is the other way, we must yield a little to insane prejudices; and I had determined not to touch on this delicate clerical question any more, nay even to rest altogether from literary work, and devote all my time to my parish and people. But you will see the necessity of maintaining the anonymity of the article intact.

About this time a proposal was made to Canon Sheehan to visit the United States for the purpose of collecting

funds to lift the debt on the beautiful cathedral building at Queenstown. His friends in America strongly urged him to avoid if possible such a mission, lest it should create a false impression of the purpose of his literary work. The following letters bear on this subject:

BRIDGE HOUSE, DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
Sept. 14, '01.

DEAR FATHER HEUSER,

I have been absent from home on a brief holiday; and found your letter before me . . . I should like to see my work occasionally in the *Review*, which has been an excellent patron to me. And particularly I should wish to send you from time to time short little sketches, which would not involve the wear and tear of examining Cyclopedias, but where I could call on my own material. Any suggestions of this kind I shall gladly accept from you.

I have given *Luke Delmege* to the firm of Longmans, Green and Co., of London and New York, to be brought out simultaneously . . . Many thanks for the typed chapters which came safely to hand. Messrs. Longmans will apply to you direct, or through me for copyright.

I have definitely declined (indeed never seriously entertained) the mission of collecting money in the States. It was morally repugnant to my feelings; and physically impossible to a wretched constitution, though I should have much wished to oblige our Bishop who is naturally impatient under a load of debt.

I am rushing through a mountain of correspondence. Sometimes I wish you had never drawn me out of my beloved obscurity. I am paying the penalty dearly.

Ever sincerely, my dear Fr. Heuser,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

The question of dramatizing "Daddy Dan" had now been raised in several quarters. Mindful of the dangers that beset a presentation on our modern stage of not only the priestly character but also the "Irish" peasant, the idea had been strenuously opposed, unless the play were done under absolutely safe auspices, which meant that the author himself should censor the play, determine the staging, the costumes, and the accessories in detail.

Under the Cedars and the Stars, which went forth with

the author's name attached, was favorably received, and apparently dispelled Father Sheehan's last misgiving about the advisability of his contributions appearing regularly, over his own name. The following shows his mind on the subject:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
Sept. 6, 1902.

MY DEAR FR. HEUSER,

Your letter and the *Dolphin* have come together. I see that in this as indeed in other matters your judgment is always right. It was not dread of criticism (I am pretty hardened now) but an idea that there was so much of my own personality in these pages that made me sensitive about appearing above my name. I had an idea that the papers would read better from an unknown and obscure writer — I mean unknown by reason of his anonymity. However, all's right now: and you have given me a grand "send off." I only hope that the papers will realize all your expectations.

If the *Dolphin* once gets hold, it must prove a valuable organ of instruction to the laity. I always think that our people are starved for want of wholesome intellectual food. We must try and push it here. Fr. Russell is doing his best in the *Irish Monthly*.

I have received a copy of Dr. Henry's fine book. Please thank him for me. I should like to know what Leo himself thinks of it. He must be gratified exceedingly.

Always sincerely, my dear Fr. Heuser,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

A few months later, when the papers had been widely commented upon, he writes:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
March 7, 1903.

Very many thanks for letter and cheque just received. From some communications I have received, I fancy these papers in the *Dolphin* are finding their way into unusual, unexpected places, and, I think, are likely to effect some good — at least, perhaps they may liberate us Catholics from the ordinary charge of obscurantism.

I should prefer the remark about Paragraph LXI to pass unnoticed. These criticisms are generally suggested by vanity, and it is merely to flatter such vanity to notice them. The expression, of course, "exiled from the blisses of heaven" is not theologically

exact; but my meaning was quite apparent. Perhaps I should have said "exiled, according to our selfish conceits, from the blisses of heaven though enjoying the beatific Vision," etc.

What a wonderful literature we should have, if even one tenth of our critics would write something themselves.

Ever sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

P.S. — A few days with you here will be a rare break in the monotony of my life. But let me know the "when" of your coming.

When *Under the Cedars and the Stars* had run to its conclusion, the *Dolphin* manager made an agreement with Father Sheehan for a number of copies to be reprinted from the plates of the serial as it appeared in the magazine. These copies were not to be sold, but to be sent as a gift to the original subscribers. Later on these plates were presented to Father Sheehan for the American edition of the volume, which was issued by Benziger Brothers, of New York.

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
12. XI. '03.

I received in good condition and time your edition of "Under the Cedars and the Stars." The type and all were so familiar and beautiful, I had the impertinence to write to the office for a few more. And they sent me six, which, considering the limited nature of the edition, was very generous. I suppose by this time the Irish edition has come into your hands. I have improved it by marginal notes and a table of contents which seem attractive.

I am now kept very busy in lecturing, mostly in Dublin. It is a form of literature I don't like. I prefer my desk, and pen and lamp, and I find the physical effort of talking for over an hour very distressing, as lungs and heart are both weak. I am ploughing through a paper for the Maynooth students to be read on December 1st. The late president, Dr. Gargan, wrote so urgently I could not refuse him; and the present President urged the matter again. So there was no getting out of it. Besides, of all audiences, I like students best. I hope your Homiletic Review will do well. The New York man, Wagner, has two bound volumes, MSS., of my sermons which he is doling out. I understood

that this was a priestly undertaking, under the exclusive management of priests. Otherwise I would not have sent them.

Need I say how glad I shall be to see you here? Thanks for the President's letter.

I had a few interviews here in the autumn with Chief Justice Holmes, son of the author of "The Autocrat." He was a most interesting man; and when we got on philosophical topics he talked well . . . I know I am exacting: but could you send him a copy of the "Cedars and Stars"? He lives in Boston.

Always sincerely, my dear Fr. Heuser,

P. A. SHEEHAN.

Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, mentioned in the above letter, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States since 1902, had, on the occasion of a visit to England, been induced to spend a brief holiday with his friends, Lord and Lady Castletown of Upper Ossory, at "Doneraile Court" in Ireland. It was Lord Castletown's habit to introduce visitors of distinction in the literary or educational world at the Catholic Rectory; for he held the Canon in high esteem, not only for his mental attainments but for his practical efforts in promoting the moral and economic interests of the district. It will be seen how much the mutual understanding and good feeling between the pastor of Doneraile and the gentry of the neighborhood contributed to the improvement of local conditions. Although the Canon rarely, if ever, visited in deference to purely social conventions, he was invariably invited by the local authorities to assemblies and the more important functions. He frequently presided on these occasions as chairman, or was chosen as one of the speakers by reason of his recognized gift of public address and his ability for organizing. On the other hand he was often sought by the local land owners for consultation, who brought their friends with them, and the Canon's courteous and hospitable manners were sure to put his visitors at their ease.

In this way Justice Holmes met the author of *My New Curate*. The philosophical habit of mind and literary

tastes of the two men appear to have at once drawn them toward each other, and there sprang up between them an intimacy fruitful of rare intellectual intercourse, as is manifest from their correspondence, covering nearly ten years, to the very eve of the priest's death.

"I sincerely hope," writes the Canon after the departure of his American friend, "you will find time during the long vacations to run over again. For your little morning visits to me were gleams of sunshine across a grey and monotonous life." The attraction for Canon Sheehan was but natural. Though wholly contented in the life of pastoral and literary occupation which he had chosen, he at times felt the comparative isolation which separated him from intercourse with men of congenial temperament and education. The clergy whom he met were apt to discuss parochial matters or "talk shop," as men say. On the rare occasions when he went abroad he met men of science or letters mostly on a professional footing. In correspondence with his more intimate friends alone did he find that incentive to intellectual activity which he so highly valued and which he sought to cultivate among those for whom he labored. "I feel my greatest want to be some intercourse with minds whose ideas would act as a stimulant to thought by casting new light on old subjects." He found the company of the American jurist pleasant because it brought him, as he said, face to face with original thinking on subjects that were of the deepest interest to him. Accordingly we find these two men discussing, across the sea, problems of philosophy and literary art, as well as the incidents of daily life which touch their special professions.

CRITICISMS

Meanwhile favorable criticisms were pouring in upon the author from all sides about *Luke Delmege* and *Under the Cedars and the Stars*. Father Russell kept his friend informed about them.

I suppose sooner or later you see nearly all the criticisms of your book. I tear out the enclosed from the last *American Catholic*

Quarterly. The advertisement in *Westminster Gazette* of Monday gives a good phrase from the *Spectator* and another from *Punch*. Of course you have seen the *Tablet* of Saturday.

In another letter he says:

In Dublin I saw Stephen Gwynn's new book *To-day and To-morrow in Ireland*. Two of the essays are reviews of *Luke Delmege* and *My New Curate*, one of them reprinted from the *Edinburgh Review* where I saw it at Lord Gormanston's . . . *Luke Delmege* is getting the better of its enemies.

The "enemies" here referred to were a few educational theorists who saw in the volume a direct attack upon Maynooth College and its educational methods. They singled out trivial exaggerations in the volume and by them judged alike the motive and manner of the author. No doubt he did intend to criticize. No doubt, too, he overdrew his figures. But in doing so he only followed the principle: "To get a hearing one must perforce exaggerate." Most readers of *Luke Delmege* fully understood this.

More discriminating naturally were the criticisms of *Under the Cedars and the Stars*. Maurice Francis Egan, a man of letters and, since 1907, U. S. Minister to Denmark, suggested a possible change in the manner of presentation. The editor of the *Month* printed a critique in which he read the author a severe lecture not only for abandoning the delectable art of writing stories and indulging in literary and philosophical reflections, but for misrepresenting "blackbirds and throstles" and for comparing the song of the "missel-thrush to Crashaw's 'Music Duel.'" The commentators even went so far as to seriously regret that the American system of spelling should have been retained in the English edition of the book. Father Russell in a letter to Canon Sheehan writes of one of these critics that, though he was terribly observant about the habits and colors, etc., of birds, he knew him to be at heart a great admirer of the Irish author. "Write," he adds, "whatever you feel inclined to, and don't mind anybody." A little while before he had told him:

I am sure you are too broadminded to be impressed by these notions. You are yourself the best judge of what is at any given time the best vent for your heart and mind. Nevertheless, you must not be surprised if those reveries and discussions which delight a great many already and will in other forms delight many generations of readers after your death, should not "enthuse," as they would say themselves, your American readers . . . *Sartor Resartus* did not increase the circulation of *Fraser's Magazine*. You will remember the Cork priest who was its only Irish admirer — was it Father A. B. O'Shea? Follow your own inspirations bravely to the end, and make this perhaps the most beautiful of all your books. Critics will constantly refer to the standard of *My New Curate* — "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

For the rest, there were not wanting competent judges who placed *Under the Cedars and the Stars* among Canon Sheehan's best work. His friend Justice Holmes writes:

This moment I have finished the book. It is the only book, except a few short light things that I don't count, that I have read since I received it. . . . And now I must tell you once more of the love and exaltation which your words have the skill to command, as few words that I have read anywhere can. It is true that I don't believe your philosophy, or shall I say the religion which you so beautifully exalt. . . . When I begin to write to you I am tempted to say many things, but I refrain. I do not want to burden you either with my reflections or with the feeling that you must answer. I simply want to tell you more emphatically than before, now that I have finished your book, that I owe you my admiration and thanks.

(*Febr.* 1904.)

Similar opinions were expressed by men of such different type in literary attainments as the Dublin Judge D. H. Madden and the American humorist Joel Chandler Harris. The author of *Uncle Remus* chose for constant companions during his retirement "The Bible and Thomas à Kempis, then Shakespeare, Newman, Sheehan." At this time he had not yet become a Catholic.

SOCIALISM AS A LITERARY THEME

It was important that Father Sheehan should keep up his connection with the *Ecclesiastical Review*, in which he had begun his sketches of clerical life. He himself was anxious to do so, as appears from his letters, and his strength lay undoubtedly in the portrayal of pastoral or clerical characters and doings. But to find a new form into which to cast the theme was not easy. He was not sufficiently informed about conditions in America, and its clerical types, to write a novel with a New World background. It would have been futile to ask him to attempt a work on these lines.

Among the subjects he had not touched upon was Socialism. Socialism was spreading its tenets in English-speaking countries generally. Communism and equal rights, the dignity of labor and the abuses of wealth, were being everywhere discussed; and Catholics, especially the proletariat, were being indoctrinated with dangerous principles leading to protracted strikes and serious differences between working men and employers. A good story dealing with the industrial problems of the day would appeal to clergy and laity alike. It could point out the fallacies of certain popular and plausible arguments of the demagogues and agitators on the one hand, and the responsibilities of wealth on the other. Thus the principles of Christian ethics would supply the argument, whilst the scenes of the story could be set in Ireland or England. It was clear that such a serial would serve both a pastoral and an apologetic purpose. [1]

Father Sheehan accepted the suggestion; but from the outset he experienced difficulty in dealing with the subject, chiefly because the social question and the labor problem as they existed in Ireland were of a different nature from what they are in the United States, Canada, or Australia. The setting of the proposed novel was to have been a monastery in the east of Ireland where the Friars from various

[1] The work was subsequently done, not by Father Sheehan, but by Richard Aumerle Maher in a serial written for the *Review* under the title *The Heart of a Man*.

missions of the home and foreign field should meet in brotherly converse to exchange views regarding the great moral questions agitating the masses to whom they were constantly preaching. As men of zeal and intelligence, who came in contact with the people in the large industrial centers at home and abroad, they could speak with knowledge and authority.

It had been suggested to him also that his short story, *The Monks of Trabolgan*, might be elaborated into the proposed novel. Referring to the subject in a letter at this time, he says: "When I wrote *The Monks of Trabolgan*, some years ago, I had in view a large work on the monastic life such as you have suggested. But I found I was anticipated by Huysmans; so I left it a mere sketch. I am now laboring at the *Labour and Capital* novel, but am making no headway. The agony of the thing does not strike us; and all my sympathies are with the laboring classes."

On June 13th (1904) he writes:

I have been thinking much about your socialist novel; but it is a good deal outside my sphere of thought. What should be the underlying principle? Do atheism and socialism go together? How are we to keep the golden mean between labour and capital? What of Christian Socialism? These are a few of the questions that keep cropping up, when I allow myself to think of the matter. And are not the conditions of labour in America (for I should place the scene there) very deplorable? I never think without a shudder of your mills and tenement houses, and the environments of the poor. Books are no guide. One or two facts about Socialists would guide me better. . . .

I am ever so sorry you didn't take up *Luke Delmege* and this book (*Under the Cedars*). It would have been a great gratification to me to know that my books were helping on the great cause of Catholic literature, for which you are doing so much. I hope you will keep the plates of the last work safe. They may be useful.

Always most sincerely,
My dear Fr. Heuser,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

About this time the Ecclesiastical Review secured the manuscript of *Glenanaar*. It was not a clerical novel, though several churchmen figured in it. The Messrs. Longmans of London were to publish the story after it had been printed as a serial in the *Dolphin*, in which magazine it ran from November, 1904, to August the following year.

Glenanaar, like *The Graves at Kilmorna*, is more than a novel. It is actual history, based upon authentic records. While going over some old files of the *Southern Reporter* and the *Commercial Courier* at the house of his friend Philip Harold Barry, J.P., who has his residence in the parish of Doneraile, the Canon had come upon the report of the State trials of the so-called "Doneraile Conspiracy" in the autumn of 1829. The men of the district who had been accused of fomenting a secret rebellion against the local government were tried at the Cork Assizes by a special Commission sent out from Dublin Castle, and their descendants were still living in the neighborhood.

Our author realized at once that here was material for an important story, which his familiarity with the local conditions and scenes allowed him to paint in vivid colors, and at the same time it afforded him the opportunity of pointing a moral which was calculated to enliven the patriotic faith of his people. Incidentally the facts of the case were also a vindication of the fair name of some local families whose members had been implicated in the accusations.

In order to give the proper historical background to his story, Canon Sheehan went to Cork and obtained permission to examine the old court records of the famous trial. These he carefully copied, and, so far as was practicable, incorporated in the novel, which he completed in MS. within little more than six weeks.

The central figure of the story is an Irish American — Terrence Casey. He is the grandson of an "informer," Patrick (known as "Cloumper") Daly. Daly's child, the mother of Casey, had been abandoned by its parents.

The little foundling is taken in by a kindly disposed farmer, Edmond Connors, who is one of a number of men falsely accused by Daly as implicated in a conspiracy against the Government. When the "informer" learns that Connors has sheltered his child, he retracts and makes affidavit of the farmer's innocence; then, pocketing the "reward" of his testimony, escapes with his wife to America. The adopted waif grows to womanhood and is married to an honest blacksmith. Their son, come to manhood, accidentally learns that his mother is the daughter of the "informer"; and, unable to reconcile the shame of that thought with his patriotism, abandoning his home, he too goes to America. He works in the Nevada gold mines. Having acquired a fortune he is moved to return to his native land by the memory of a young girl to whom he had been ardently attached. After an absence of more than twenty years he finds his early love a widow prematurely aged through sorrow. She has a daughter, the image of her mother as he had known her. He reveals his purpose of claiming his old bride, and in the end marries the daughter, whom he takes with him to live in the New World.

The persistent feature of the story is the recurrence of the stigma of the informer's guilt which clings, in the mind of the people, to Casey's family, according to the saying: "what goes into the blood is bred in the bone." The romance is very realistic, and there are parts that are dramatically pathetic — such as the rescue of the child Nodlac from the snow; the death of old Edmond Connors; the desperate night ride of William Burke, brother of one of the men on trial; the sudden appearance in the courthouse of Daniel O'Connell, the hero of the Repeal agitation. Finally, there is the graphic description of the desolate scenes of the great Famine in the autumn of 1847, one of the most touching passages in the book.

The novel was well received in Ireland, and the critics of the author's former volumes seemed appeased by the evident patriotism that pervaded the story.

Father Russell sent the author the first appreciation: —

ST. STANISLAUS' COLLEGE, TULLAMORE.
April 14, 1905.

MY DEAR CANON SHEEHAN,

You have given me a great pleasure and privilege in seeing "Glenanaar" to the end before the rest of the world. I wonder what rank it will take in the hierarchy of your books. There are certainly very noble things in it, and it is completely different from all your other books. When it comes out in book form, I will read it through as eagerly as if I had never seen it before. I will probably see the symmetry of your plan better than I do now. The construction is certainly complicated, reminiscence alternating with contemporary history.

You speak of '47 and '48 as the famine years. I suppose you are right, for O'Connell died in '47 (didn't he?) and certainly the famine cloud hung dark over Ireland then; but was not distress felt keenly in 1846? Is *Goula* the Irish for *scorpion?* I have heard of Sullivan Goula and Scorpion Stanley.

Longmans will bring out two books this season in which I am deeply interested — "Glenanaar" and "The Life of Sir John Gilbert." Lady Gilbert is over there now. I saw a specimen page. I thought that his name was to appear on the title page of Fr. Henry Browne's new book, "Handbook of Homeric Studies"; but "Browne and Nolan" are the only names seen.

Happy Easter to you.
Ever yours sincerely,
M. RUSSELL, S.J.

Later, when the novel appeared in book form, the same good friend watches the progress of its reception by the critics:

ST. STANISLAUS' COLLEGE, TULLAMORE.
April 28, 1905.

DEAR CANON SHEEHAN,

Have you a Press Cutting Agency to send the reviews of *Glenanaar?* The only ones I have noticed are *The Times* and *The Messenger* (New York). *The Times* (weekly edition Literary Supplement July 7) calls it "a vigorous and skilful piece of work" — that you have hit on "a fine subject for romance," and that you "know well the humour, the faults and the pathos" of certain phases of nationalism.

The Messenger is a magazine of only two or three years' standing;

and though it is in the same hands as the devotional *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, it is in reality quite distinct and in another sphere altogether. I have heard clever men say it is the best thing of the sort that we have. Its review is of course very favorable (small thanks to it). It has misgivings about the judiciousness of your arrangement of the parts of your story — going back so minutely into the past after you had begun by presenting your hero in the present. Probably the story could not have been told otherwise. If you don't see *The Messenger*, I can send it to you.

The girls of a Convent school in Chicago call you "the Poet Priest of Ireland" without naming you at all. But I find it is some masculine periodical that quotes "Under the Cedars and the Stars" in that way.

Ever yours affectionately,
MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

DONERAILE,

CO. CORK.

June 30/99.

My dear Fr Hewer,

Your letter with enclosures (for which accept my grateful thanks) has just reached me; and the American mail leaves in a few hours; so I am snatching a brief moment to thank you again for all your kindness. We go on retreat tomorrow; and then I go to England for a brief holiday.

As I said before, I feel quite humbled and ashamed at all the praise my few papers have received. But my reward lies not there, for I know only too well what a passing thing is human praise or blame. But I feel great gratitude towards our L. Lord for his having vouchsafed to use me for His own sacred cause; and it is a large and generous reward to be assured, as I have been assured

so many times, that I have earned the goodwill and affection of the American priesthood, whom I have always revered since I had the happiness of meeting some of them, during my curacy in Queenstown. This week again Fr. Yorke, of San Francisco, has been saying kind things of me in Maynooth; and yesterday I had a charming letter from one of your best contributors, Fr. Brunean, asking permission to translate my books into French.

. . . . . .

I am so sorry I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you, I am to face the autumn. Perhaps, the Fates will yet be kind, and let you come. I have a large house and garden in a very poor village: but the country around is beautiful and a few weeks here would send you back rejuvenated and refreshed to your desk. May it be so!

Again, with all thanks,
I am, my dear Editor
Yours in Ct.
P. A. Sheehan P.P.

VIII

A HOLIDAY IN GERMANY

FOR the last seven years Canon Sheehan had given more than the spare hours of daily leisure to his literary work. His engagements with the magazines had put him under some pressure; and the chapters originally written for serial publication had to be revised in order to meet the demands of the book reader. The fact that the new novels spread with surprising rapidity also greatly increased his correspondence, and there came to him from many quarters requests for service as critic and lecturer. Popularity demands its tithes, and Father Sheehan had to pay them in additional labor. How widely his talent was being canvassed may be estimated from the fact that of *My New Curate* about thirty thousand copies (not including translations) were sold within eighteen months. *Luke Delmege* was issued in an edition of ten thousand copies. *Under the Cedars and the Stars*, which the author cherished especially because it contained his more intimate communings with nature and his books, was prized for the noble sentiments it inculcated as well as for its keen analysis of the hidden motives that control the currents of life. There were his poems to add to his popularity, and his sermons, printed in the *Homiletic Review*, of New York. *Glenanaar*, the last mentioned of his novels, and which had taxed his energies to the utmost, was assured likewise of a large circle of interested readers. If close application to literary work called for a holiday he had certainly deserved it.

All this while he had paid close attention to his pastoral work, which was by no means light. Careful, with a very tender solicitude, of the poor and the sick; ever attentive to the spiritual needs of his parishioners in their home

relations as well as in the church; watchful with an affectionate anxiety over the education of the children of his village and the neighboring districts, he had also devoted much of his time to a study of the agrarian question which was agitating the country and which was bound up with the future welfare of his people. Indeed the fact that, amid these engrossing duties, he still had found it possible to write, was due to the circumstance only that he regarded his literary work as a recreation, a sort of musical accompaniment to his more serious tasks. Following the inspirations of his poetical mind was for him like answering distant pilgrim calls of the chanters at the festival seasons. They had in them memories of strains in which the old Celtic bards poured out their prophetic longings for freedom, with many a thrill of anticipated triumph. There were endless variations in these melodies of mingled sorrow and joy, and in them he found the *motifs* that swayed the impulses of his own people, one hour in their sufferings, and the next in their faith-blessed humor, Ierne's legacy to one of the most gifted of races.

But while he enjoyed his work, and in some measure even the importunings that urged him to greater application, the physical strings of his instrument were being worn and there was danger of their snapping in the very midst of his enthusiasm. He was advised to take a holiday; and, to make it effectual through a complete change of scene and intercourse, the doctors counseled a trip to the Continent.

His own inclinations had never been toward foreign travel. Ireland had such a wealth of scenery in all the varieties that might draw one who sought merely change and beauty; and few knew better than he how to appreciate her natural charms. He had been in England, of course, and once, a brief trip, to France. But that could hardly be called travel in the modern sense, even if it was recreation. He felt no particular attraction for Italy, much as he loved the thought and the language of Dante. Only a little while before this date he had expressed his sentiments on the subject:

People say to me: "Never seen Rome! or Florence! St. Peter's! The frescoes of the Sistine! The galleries in the Pitti palace!" — Never. Nor do I much care. If I were to go to Italy, I would go to seek the supernatural; because it is the only thing I could really and permanently admire. I would go to Rome, and see the Spiritual Head of Christ's Empire; I would go to Loreto and kiss the ground once trodden by Jesus and holy Mary; I would go to Assisi, and walk every step of the *Via Crucis* the "poor man" trod. I would make a pilgrimage to Siena; and I would visit every *stigmatica* and *ecstatica*. And there in her humble chamber I would wonder and rejoice. I would have emotions, which the grandeur of St. Peter's, and the terrors of Vesuvius, and the beauties of Naples, and the sublimity of Pompeii could never excite. For I would come into touch with the Supernatural — with God; and the work of His fingers is more to me than the most stupendous creations of human minds.

But he had a liking for Germany and things German. In *Luke Delmege* there is a chapter, "En Route," in which he introduces "Father Martin Hughes," of whom he says: "Father Martin was almost the direct antithesis to his friends, and it was from him Luke's future life took some of its color." This Father Martin had spent two years as a student in Germany, intending originally to devote himself to the study of Law. While at the University he had had free scope to indulge his love for nature as much as for science and letters. Sometimes he had lodged in humble cottages by the banks of legendary rivers, or in the solitude of the Black Mountain forests; and here "he had learnt to prize the simple, cleanly lives, grey and drab in their monotony, but gilded by the music and the mystery that seemed to hang, like a golden cloud, above the Fatherland."

In after life he often recurred, with all the gratefulness of memory, to the kindliness and unaffected politeness of these simple peasants and woodcutters; and the little marks of sympathetic friendship, such as the placing of a bunch of violets with silent courtesy on his dressing table, of the little presents on his birthday, when his portrait was decorated by some Gretchen or Ottilie, were graved indelibly on a memory almost too retentive. Then the pathos of the German hymns, sung by a whole family around

the supper table, and to the accompaniment of a single piano such as you see in every German household, haunted him like a dream . . .

And when by degrees he began to realize that this country, which but a few years back had been cursed by a foreign tongue, had now, by a supreme magnificent effort, created its own language, and a literature unsurpassed for richness and sweetness, he saturated himself with the poetry and philosophy of the country, which gave a new color and embellishment to life.

Not that he troubled himself much about the cloudy metaphysics of this school or that, or the fine hair-splitting of philosophical mountebanks, who ridiculed the scholastics for logic chopping, yet imitated in untruth the worst systems they condemned; but he allowed the fine mists and mountain dews of Schiller, Richter and Novalis to wrap him round, and saturate his spirit, and he thanked God that He had given poets to the world.

No doubt the fact that one of the first marks of appreciation of his work came to him from Germany had much to do with his desire to visit that country, all the more, since, as we have seen, his leanings toward German thought had begun at Maynooth with his readings of Carlyle. The Canon's brother, Mr. Denis Sheehan, speaks of the welcome given to the Canon's work by German critics:

The extraordinary chorus of appreciation in the Press of Germany of all shades of religious opinion was a great surprise and gratification to Father Sheehan. *Luke Delmege* is considered by Germans as his best work, and he received many letters from Protestants as well as from Catholics dealing with references in the book, and asking for explanations on points of religious belief, &c.

Much of this may have been due to his expressed admiration for the German methods of study, especially of the sciences. Of this his brother says:

The study of mathematics was advocated by him as the best kind of mind-training for the reasoning powers; and to his own special love for this branch of study may be attributed his interest in Astronomy. He kept in touch with each new theory and

speculation regarding the problems of this science of Astronomy and studied the books and scientific articles as they appeared. He could not conceive how any one could be an atheist who would ponder on the mystery of the universe, and often he said that there is no education where the young mind is not taught to study the beauty and wonders of nature around us, and the illimitable splendor of the Heavens.

But what Father Sheehan had learned most to value in the German people, as he tells us elsewhere, was their habit of orderly organization and strict rule of seriousness and service, allied with the poetry and music which are part of their lives. It had inspired him with ideals of what he wanted to see his own people cultivate by means of a revised educational system. He was convinced that the Celtic nature possessed such extraordinary gifts of its own, that these, when brought to efficiency by the wholesome discipline of methodical training, would produce in the rising generation, and in an atmosphere of newly acquired freedom, a new nation that might vie in intellectual and moral power with the strongest in the world. For, better than rule of sword or cannon, was the gentle sway of a Christian civilization that utilized the resources of such a race and country. This is what he dreamt of as the ideal of Ireland's emancipation. Hence, as he says of Luke:

> He never abandoned his German studies during all his after-life. He had conceived the original and apparently extravagant idea of engrafting German ideas and German habits and manners on the peasantry at home; and he had written one thoughtful article on the affinity between German and Irish thought and tradition. He thought to show that German idealism and Celtic mysticism were the same; and that the issue of an alliance between the thoughts and sympathies of these nations should necessarily be a happy one.

It was in July of 1904 that Canon Sheehan at length crossed the English Channel on his way to the Rhine country. He wished, while getting a vacation, to try the curative effects of the famous saline baths at Nauheim in Hesse. His lodgings were for a time at the Imperial Hotel,

but the noise from the trains at night compelled him to exchange his quarters for apartments at the Augusta Victoria. These happened to be more sumptuous. In a letter to a nun of the Presentation Convent at Doneraile he complains of the unaccustomed comforts to the guests there. "I am pretty tired of all the splendour and magnificence of this place; and pining for my desk and garden. But for a lazy fashionable person who could enjoy the style and music and eating and drinking, and idleness, it would be a Paradise; for it certainly is a beautiful place, and the attractions are numberless. A magnificent string band plays three times a day, each performance lasting two hours." He sketches the park where the people sit enjoying the outdoor scenes and the music all day long. "And the beautiful feature is that there is no distinction of persons. A woman who might be from Tea-pot Lane sits down at the table next to some howling swells; and the waiters approach her and take her orders as deferentially as for the others. Of course all are well dressed; and the order and politeness are beyond all praise. No one stares you out of countenance, or takes the least notice of you, although I am wearing a hat that, I say it without vanity, is the most remarkable object in Nauheim. Once, I think, I heard a young lady whisper to her companion: 'Ein Jesuit,' but that was all, and I took no offence."

But even in this foreign land he did not escape the notice which is bound to follow the literary celebrity. As soon as he had registered at the hotel, the Cologne *Volkszeitung* found him out and promptly gazetted him as the Irish writer of clerical stories. "Yesterday," he writes, "I had an invasion from Fulda, to-day a letter welcoming me to the Vaterland, and I am afraid I am in for trouble." Later on he mentions the pleasure it gave him to learn from a German priest, who had 160 children in his school, that whenever the children got a holiday they would ask the priest to read them one of the Irish priest's stories. "Can any man's ambition," he asks, "go higher?" He comments on the Prussian public school system with its orderly methods and its

respect for religious convictions. "In the Catholic (State) schools the teachers march the children to daily Mass at 6.30 A.M. School commences at seven and goes on till eleven o'clock. The older children go to work for the remainder of the day; the infants and young children return in the afternoon. The teachers are paid from 90 to 180 pounds a year; and the priest is not only manager but inspector. A government official comes round every three years; but he is of no account." He observed the national peculiarities and especially the religious customs of the Catholic population. Many of their practices struck him as greatly helpful to piety. "Over every grave in the cemetery," he writes, "I read 'Hier ruht in Gott' (Here rests in God), etc. I almost cried when I read over the grave of a tiny child: 'Ruhe sanft' (Sleep softly)." One of the first things he did on his return to Doneraile was to introduce the custom, prevalent in many German churches in the Rhine country, to ring the church bell at the Elevation during Mass and at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, so that all those who hear it, whether in the church or at their work, may make a momentary spiritual communion and join in the intention of those at the altar. Of this custom faithfully maintained in Doneraile he said: "It is one of the best things that I have done in my life for my people."

Though his sojourn at Nauheim was of comparatively short duration he gathered a good deal of interesting information. "This is a cosmopolitan place," he observes, "Russian, English, Hungarian, Swedes, and the ubiquitous American."

Toward the end of September he returned, and writes:

DONERAILE, *Sept.* 24, 1904.

DEAR FATHER HEUSER,

Just arrived from Germany to find your letter before me. I have only time to say that you may omit anything you deem in individual expressions prejudicial to the interests of the story. The expression which I think you object to, was used not long ago to a friend of mine who regarded it as a joke.

I intended, as in the case of my priestly characters, to make the "Yank" a lovable character; but I find that in cases of racial or class prejudices people won't reason, but prefer to fasten on a cause of complaint.

Always sincerely.
P. A. SHEEHAN,

In another note of the same date he adds:

Last night I wrote you a hasty letter, lest I should miss the American mail. Since then I have gone over the first chapter . . .

I am quite enthusiastic about all I saw in Germany. Equally depressed with the contrast with my own poor country which the Irish in America are steadily depopulating.

I think *Glenanaar*, though short, is the most perfect piece of work I have yet executed.

I spelled the name of the romance phonetically — Glenanaar, as it is usually pronounced here. But perhaps I would spare myself some criticism from the Gaelic League if the word were printed correctly — Glenanair.

I see you have the correct spelling in the *Dolphin*. The greater part of the valley is in my parish of Doneraile.

To his friend Justice Holmes, of the United States Supreme Court, he writes under date of September 29, 1904:

I had a pleasant three weeks in Nauheim, Germany. All that good government, solicitous for the progress of its people, could do, has been done for this charming place. And the people! — a calm, grave, courteous people, enjoying life without noise or excitement, and infinitely polite to each other and to strangers.

Although Canon Sheehan had profited by his brief sojourn on the Continent and felt materially better, an insistent illness was gradually stealing its way into his vitals and sapping his constitution. It was a consolation to him that he had earned to some extent the fruits of his literary labors — a grateful recognition from a wide circle of readers. The Holy Father, made familiar with "Daddy Dan" in an Italian translation, had sent him the title of Doctor of Divinity; and his own Bishop had made him a Canon of his diocesan cathedral. His energy, as well as his convic-

tions, were such as to urge him to labor on as long as possible. But he now began — for somehow he saw his earthly end was not far off — to make provision for his eternal home. The following letter speaks for itself, and shows both his attachment to the priests of his diocese and the unselfish charity which actuated him in his work.

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
June 7, 1905.

MY DEAR FR. HEUSER,

I have assigned to my Bishop and trustees all my literary property, including *Glenanaar*, for the support of the sick and aged priests of this diocese.

I write to ask you to continue to them the favour you have so generously bestowed upon me, of holding for them the "Dolphin" plates of my book. I don't know whether my publishers have brought out a second American edition from those plates; but I am quite sure the Bishop will manage them better than I have been able to do.

Probably you will hear from His Lordship on the subject; and I am sure that, considering the object for which I am transferring all my property, you will grant them all the facility in your power.

Always sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

IX

"LISHEEN"

DURING the next two years the Canon, besides writing some few reviews of books, employed his spare hours in composing a new novel. It had to do with Irish life, but with a peculiar phase of its traditions and trials. He meant once more emphatically to voice the agony of the peasantry at home whose children were forced continually to listen to the siren calls from America. The young folks were urging their elders to leave the land of their fathers in order that they might improve their condition:

"I think there is nayther sinse or raison in our stopping here, toiling from morning to night, making money for the landlord, when there's a free counthry only five days' journey across the wather. Let us all sell out in God's name. Lizzie is dying to have us all in Boston, where nayther you nor father need ever wet your hands agin; but have carpets ondher yere feet an' the best of atin' an' dhrinkin'. Come let us go in God's name."

The young Irish girl spoke earnestly, almost passionately. It was her thought sleeping and waking.

The poor old mother was silently weeping . . . Here she was born (for Owen McAuliffe had merely come in with a couple of hundred pounds from the County of Limerick); here she was brought up; here she learnt her prayers and first lessons; here she said good-bye to her dead parents; here, on this kitchen floor, she had danced the night of her marriage; and here were her eight children born and brought up with her more than usual solicitude. She knew every rafter in the blackened roof, every stone in the fireplace, every bush on the hedge, every tree around the fields. Each winter had brought its songs and stories, for sixty years around that hearth — every summer the golden fields and the cross roads dances.

True, her life had been a life of sorrow and hardship; but these very things consecrated the place still more. Every soul loves the

place of its crucifixion; and her humble Calvary was knit into her life like a living thing. — And to think of leaving all that and going away into a strange, mysterious country, a peopled desert, where for every one that crossed its desolation and emerged successful a hundred had gone down and were lost. Oh no! the thought was too dreadful; and it broke out into the eloquence of her silent tears.

Lisheen appeared in book form in 1907, after running serially in the *Catholic World* of New York. Father Russell comments on it as follows:

ST. F. XAVIER'S, DUBLIN, *Jan.* 3.

DEAR CANON SHEEHAN,

"Lisheen" begins with immense spirit. *The Catholic World* will be run upon this year. It has begun by putting you and Father Benson side by side. What amazing fertility that young priest is showing!

Did you purposely repeat *down there* within two lines at foot of page 491, with *down* in the intermediate line?

You are very judiciously moderate in the use of *patois*. I do not know what difference the *h* makes in *bhoy*.

Lady Gilbert's "Mary O'Murrough" is running its course since the Christmas Number in the *Freeman's Journal*. She is not so sure as you of a first-class publisher for the next stage of her novel's existence.

Macte virtute. Prospere procede.

Ever yours affectionately,

MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

A critic in the *Dublin Review*, comparing the story with René Bazin's *La Terre qui meurt*, severely censured it for its vivid portrayal of the monster of Landlordism as the chief source of all the sufferings of the Irish people.

Perhaps Canon Sheehan does not think his public capable of entering into more difficult economic questions, and we are the more led to think this, as we have long been of opinion that he has too great a contempt for his readers. He cannot believe that we are really contented with any thing so simple and so homely as the lives of the Irish-poor.

It was hardly a fair judgment. Canon Sheehan had no contempt for his readers. He merely expressed his

abiding love for his people at home, and for the exiles that had been driven away to seek a better lot in foreign lands. Affection for his countrymen, dictated by his Irish heart, resented and sought the causes of the abject condition in which they found themselves. Like every artist who is also a moralist or a reformer (and as a priest he was both), he felt bound to expose what seemed to be the very root of the wrongs under which his people were smarting.

As for his literary power, critics were agreed that Canon Sheehan's genius was such as "to enthrall the reader by his most wonderful presentments of living beings." His chapters are "brimful of life, of sunshine and shadow, and of the sweetest virtues, and of a most brilliant pathos." Naturally the defenders of English rule in Ireland would not have him discredit landlordism by stigmatizing it in his portrayal of "Major Outram," and others of his characters. They preferred that the Irish writer should confine himself to studies of Irish life such as James Matthew Barrie gave us of Scotch life in a *Window in Thrums*. But most of Canon Sheehan's readers felt that, "if we cannot always have such complete joys as *My New Curate*, we might at least be allowed to see and learn the great lessons he can teach us from the Irish race. It matters not whether this be done in short studies or in complete novels, so long as he allows free play to the true artist and genius, unsurpassed by any one living in his portrayal of Irish life."[1]

If it be true that Canon Sheehan's genius is "unsurpassed in his portrayal of Irish life," it is equally true that he shows no less skill and accuracy in picturing certain English types to which chiefly the Irish people owe their trials. *Lisheen* is a thrilling story in which the actual miseries begotten of landlordism are contrasted with the systematic improvements proposed by a party of benevolent reformers in Ireland. The descriptions of scenery and action are singularly graphic. There is a double vein of romance running through the narrative; and the picture of "Father Cosgrove" furnishes the religious motive to the whole.

[1] *Dublin Review*, Jan. 1908, pp. 185–187.

The following letter to Canon Sheehan from Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., who gives his impression on reading the book, is of interest.

ST. AMES HILL, HYDRO, CO. CORK.
Oct. 1907.

MY DEAR CANON PATRICK,

I delayed writing to thank you for the copy of "Lisheen" until I should have read it through. I have now done so from beginning to end with an intense psychological interest which no work of fiction has raised in me for many a day. Since Oliver Wendell Holmes disappeared there has been nothing that succeeds so well in putting one into a cheerful mood with human nature, while not shirking the many dark and tragic events that sometimes make the most hopeful of us a little sick of heart. You may be interested to hear we have staying at a cottage, attached to this place, a living *viva voce* of your original conception of Maxwell — its counterpart in real life. He is a Scottish Captain Dundas (married by-the-way to a Mallow lady). It is a most singular combination both of Maxwell and of Hamberton. He goes every year — to Kerry, of all places — to spend some weeks with the Dingle fishermen, as one of themselves — feeds on their potatoes and milk, and sleeps on a truckle by the cabin fire — then comes back greatly refreshed in body and soul. More interesting to me even than the story are the glimpses of your own psychical travail which I seem to get constantly through its pages and in all of which our joys and sadness of the recluse are so strangely alike. The book will, I am sure, do a vast deal to give intelligent strangers a better opinion of us than we can sometimes get to have of ourselves.

My wife wishes your acceptance of a little book of her own which to my masculine and perhaps bigoted judgment seems to be a very sweet glimpse of the woman-world. Pray, don't trouble to reply, as she and I know that the book will pass under sympathetic eyes.

My own European sketches are too slight for separate publication, but you will be glad to hear that while away and freed from the horrors of Irish public affairs I scribbled a series of "Chats with Young Irishmen" which may be an answer to your suggestion.

Believe me, my dear Canon Patrick,

Your affectionate friend,
WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

The Canon himself explains the purpose of his story in a rhythmic answer to a friend who had asked him, "Why did you write *Lisheen?*"

"Why did I write *Lisheen?*" — To show
The claims of brotherhood and kin;
The deep broad streams of Love that flow
In peers' and peasants' hearts — the sin
Of broken plighted vows — the Fate
That follows over land and sea
On wheel and rudder them that flee
The boundless bounds of the Estate
Of Right and Law inviolate!
If Nemesis relentless be,
And Fate has seals of certainty,
The spirit that has borne the test
Of spirits ranks amongst the best —
The bravest who aspire to be
The Bayards of Humanity!

DONERAILE, IRELAND
Nov. 9th 1907

He sent a copy of the book to Mr. Justice Holmes, who writes from Washington, November 7, 1907:

I thank you for sending me your novel. It has the same sweet idealism, the same poetic turn, that I know, the same tender feeling. I wish that I had something to send in return — but I fear that a few timely words on *res judicata* or on the police power of the State might not give you the same pleasure. When I got back I stopped at a hotel in Boston, and was talking with a waiter I knew and telling him I had been in Ireland, County Cork. He asked me if I had been in the neighborhood of Doneraile. I said: yes. Whereupon he asked if I had seen Canon Sheehan. It seems that he was a reader and admirer of your works. Every little counts. And as an admirer is the vehicle of truth it matters not that he is humble. I am working hard and do not often get a breathing space before dinner, and afterwards I find it wise not to read or write. Therefore I have read your novel by snatches — ten minutes at a time. I think your fashionable people and men of the world are not quite so real as your peasants; and I wonder whether there is not implied too wholesale a condemnation of the fashionable world.

No doubt Justice Holmes was right. Canon Sheehan had had only a partial taste of the life of modern society. He thought much of it to be artificial, and he was not inclined to study it or to regard it with leniency. Matthew Russell had told him plainly in another connection that therein he failed.

X

RELIGIO–POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS

WHILE Canon Sheehan was filling out his hours of leisure from pastoral work by the writing of clerical romances and occasional poems, he did not at any time lose sight of the political situation which promised a new dawn of liberty and religious development for Ireland. He watched the influential journals; made systematic notes of facts and occurrences, as they struck him, so that they might serve him in his instructions, lectures, and sermons. He commented on public events and personal incidents, and jotted down the moral which he drew from them. He analyzed important utterances of popular books and magazine articles; and he kept himself informed of the progress of the arts and sciences. With a keen interest that sought to apply each fact to the processes of home government, he followed the political movements in England and abroad. His mind was bent on doing everything in his power to promote the struggle for Home Rule among his people. From time to time he sent his impressions touching political matters to the newspapers; nearly always anonymously.

Among the more notable criticisms written by him at this time was a review of an important volume by a Limerick priest, Dr. Michaèl O'Riordan, at present Rector of the Irish College in Rome, with whom he had occasion to discuss the religio-political crisis that seemed to call for the active participation of the Irish clergy. Dr. O'Riordan had urged the Canon to undertake the editorship of a monthly magazine for the defense, independently, of national and Catholic principles. In *Catholicity and Progress in Ireland*[1] the Limerick churchman had given an answer to

[1] London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner & Co., 1905.

Sir Horace Plunkett's recently published volume *Ireland in the New Century*. The latter was chairman of the Agricultural Board of Ireland. He believed he saw certain great evils existent in his country, and he set himself with free valor, as the Canon says, to encounter and overcome them. He planned, organized, lectured, traveled, spared neither money, time, nor trouble to push on "the industrial development" of Ireland. Finally he wrote his book, which aroused the widespread disapprobation of his countrymen, but especially the Catholics. The baronet had sought to demonstrate that the real cause of Ireland's backwardness, industrially, educationally, and in every other way was chargeable to the Catholic clergy. He instanced the extravagance of Irish Catholics in church building. That fact alone was, in his estimation, a proof of their utter lack of individuality and self-reliance. In their efforts to erect costly houses of worship they were retarding industrial progress, while actually following the mere whims of men who sought their own aggrandizement. Dr. O'Riordan answers this and similar charges of Sir Horace Plunkett's in a direct and caustic way; and Canon Sheehan adds his approving comment by enlarging upon the iniquities of the cliques who dominate Irish life, while they fasten the results of their ill-doing upon the people. He retorts in bitter irony:

> It is not inequitable land laws, it is not evil administration, it is not crushing taxes, it is not absenteeism, that are the causes of Irish misery; it is the fact that the Irish are taught by their religion to place their hopes in another world; that they build churches, hospitals, schools, convents, but will not give a penny to ironclads and factories; and that the Irish priest is the cause of all this painful retrogression, and has besides stamped out the vitality of the race by a rigid and despotic enforcement of a chastity which another writer has described as "awful."

The reader is informed from government figures about the unequal cost of carrying on the Union; he gets a fair view of the moral character of the population by comparative lists of criminality in different sections of the country

where Catholics and Protestants live separately; and he learns that the tenants' earnings have gone to absentee landlords, to the amount, within a few years of the last century, of ten million dollars annually. This money was spent anywhere except in the country where it was made. It becomes very plain how much the industrial conditions of the time are due to this annual drain made by the landowners. The total was twenty millions before 1830, and had risen to thirty millions before the year 1843. We learn also, what is not a little surprising in view of the general assumption that Ireland is a priest-ridden country, that of the parochial clergy there is but one priest to every 1206 Catholics, whereas there is one Episcopalian parson for every 331 church members; one Presbyterian minister for every 554 Presbyterians; and one Methodist minister for every 248 Methodists. We are thus shown the advantage Protestants have by reason of the abundant revenues that go to the landlords and public officials, apart from their social influence, their patronage, and political power. And what have they done, with all this wealth, for Ireland? "As a body Irish Protestants have lived in Ireland, that is to say, they lived *on* Ireland, *not for* Ireland." They lived out of the country as much as they could. In other words they have misspent their opportunity and their power to improve Irish industrial conditions. They had their day; and as soon as there appeared signs of their declining influence, owing to the Home Rule movement, they wanted to persuade the public that the undeveloped condition of the country is due to the uneconomic trend of the Catholic faith, and to the uneconomic character of the people directed by their priests. These are the arguments upon which the Canon enlarges. In a similar vein he sent occasional contributions to the daily and weekly press of Cork and Dublin.

Among his letters of this period we find one addressed to his friend, the author of *Her Majesty's Rebels*, the poet Lysaght.

DONERAILE
October 27, '09.

DEAR MR. LYSAGHT,

I was greatly pleased to hear from you and to know that you contemplate returning to the old land again. I belong to the Thomas Davis school of politics, which would band all Irishmen in one common phalanx for the betterment of our common country, and I hope these ideas, now repudiated, may yet prevail . . . But Ireland has changed a good deal. . . . Father Finlay and Sir Horace Plunkett would be almost alarmed to find how far they have made the fine old Irish people a "commercial" nation.

You are doing well in giving us another volume of poems. I do not know any poems that appeal to me so strongly in their melancholy music as yours. That opening poem about the "camaraderie" of the failures haunts me. You won't think me impertinent if I say that the less agnostic your future volume is the greater chance has it of success with the public. Swinburne owes his failure in catching the "aura" of popularity to his earlier poems, although he partially repudiated them and almost apologised for them; and Tennyson owed a great part of his success to the fact that he gave a doubting and anxious world some little substitute for lost faiths. The world can never do without religion. In Art, Literature, even in Science it is always predominant.

Acknowledging the receipt of some other volumes of the same author, he writes:

I hold you now in fee — your morning with all its dreams and despondencies and lyric tenderness; — your noon with all its beautiful retrospects and hopes. Now let us have your evening-thoughts "over the teacups and the fire" — a grand psalm of Christian hope and optimism. You can do it.

The note of Christian hope which Canon Sheehan here suggests sounds more distinctly out of Mr. Lysaght's next volume, *Horizons and Landmarks*.[1]

The Canon had written a number of articles for the Dublin papers on the political situation in Ireland; and this gave him occasion to emphasize the boon of religious liberty enjoyed by the people of the United States. He discusses

[1] Macmillan: London, 1911.

the subject to some extent in his correspondence with Mr. Justice Holmes, and at the same time answers his friend's strictures upon an article by Monsignor Benson, which had appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* and in which the English convert interprets the signs of the times as showing that the future belongs to the Catholic Church.

DONERAILE, CO. CORK,
August 26, 1910.

DEAR DR. HOLMES,

You are very much in my mind these last few weeks, probably because of the Autumn holidays or perhaps it was a presentiment of your letter for which I was craving. The great want of my life is lack of intellectual intercourse; and your letters are a stimulus that drives me from the superficialities of daily life into depths of thought where I have no temptation otherwise to plunge.

I think Fr. Benson's forecast of the future of the Church in America is not altogether chimerical, although probably his reasons for thinking so are quite different from mine. Whether America is yet in its adolescence, or whether it be the result of climatic conditions, there is a certain buoyancy and delightful optimism in the character of the nation that is very much akin to the Catholic spirit. And there is also depth of feeling and generosity which the older nations have long since cast aside in favour of the "critical spirit." All this tells in favour of the Church; and I think if some great thinker could reveal the inner serenity, and sense of security, with the occasional raptures that belong to certain choice spirits, particularly in our cloistered communities, half of America would rush away from the fever of modern life, like the anchorites of old, and bury themselves in monasteries.

Would you be surprised to hear that in what you say about "intellect," you come very near the dogmatic teaching of the Church, especially as revealed in the late Papal Encyclical against "Modernism" — one of the most remarkable documents that has ever been issued by the Holy See? It is a condemnation of "emotionalism," or "intuitionalism," as the sole motive of faith. The Church takes its stand upon reason as the solid foundation on which Faith rests. Hence its approval of the Thomistic philosophy, which rests entirely on the syllogism, a view accepted also by John Stuart Mill. But, as you say, intellect has its limitations, which we are all painfully conscious of; and, therefore,

if we are to reach Truth, there must be some other avenue. This we call Faith. For after all, if Intellect is the supreme and final Judge of Truth, the question at once arises, whose Intellect? or what condition of Intellect? Is it the Intellect of one solitary thinker, like Aristotle, or the common intellect of the "man in the street"? or is it the intellect of an Aristotle or a Bacon in his youth, or in his manhood, or in his old age?

I have just been reading "The Autobiography of Herbert Spencer." He appears to have modified, at the age of 60 or 70, half his dogmatic teachings as a young man. Age, experience, illness, imperfect circulation of the blood in the arteries of the brain, impure blood from hepatic troubles — all these were elements that modified half his conceptions during life. What then? Well, it follows that if we accept "intellect" alone as the norm and standard of truth, we drift at once into the belief that all knowledge is relative, and there is no absolute truth. This won't do! And it is here the intense logical consistency of Catholic teaching comes in. The Absolute Mind alone can discern absolute Truth. The moment you speak of limitations, or say "we cannot know," you admit that. Therefore, what we can know about the Universe, is just what reason verifies and what Absolute Truth has CHOSEN to reveal.

Why do I underline that word? Because, such is the pride of human intellect, that what we are really in revolt against is — the Reticence of God. We forget our place in the Universe, because we have never got rid of that Geocentric Theory which makes the little microbe, man, the apex of the Universe. We have to be humble, if we are to aspire; and we have to accept with thankfulness the little, and yet the great deal, that the Absolute Mind has chosen to reveal. We, Catholics, believe that that revelation has been made to the Church; and it is the only Church in Christendom which asserts that and speaks with authority. You think that therefore the Church is bound to coerce and persecute. Certainly not. First, because to coerce conscience by punishment is totally opposed to the spirit of the Church on the sole ground that it is a fundamental principle of Catholic theology that "the end can never justify the means." You will lift your eyebrows at this; and say: What about the "Provincial Letters," "Jesuitism," and all that? But, I am only stating the literal truth, no matter how Catholic doctrine has been twisted and abused by men. There is no more fundamental principle in all Catholic

ethical teaching, so much so that one of the most familiar questions in our daily catechising of children, and in our Sunday preaching is:

"If by one lie you could liberate your father from prison, or release all the souls that suffer in Purgatory, would you be justified in uttering it?"

And the answer is: "No! No object, however holy, can justify a thing that is evil in itself."

I know you will not urge mediaeval persecutions which we all condemn and deplore. The ages were barbarous; and then heresy was a political crime, a kind of treason — felony when the Church was identified with the State; and when heresy was productive of many social evils. — No one finds fault with the Versaillais troops for shooting down the Communists who set Paris on fire.

Besides, the spirit of our age will not tolerate persecution, altho' the *Kulturkampf* of Bismarck is rather recent. Advanced education will kill all that.

I send a little volume on the attitude of the Church towards animals. You will see how hopelessly wrong Pierre Loti is! Have you seen Huysman's "En Route"? The story of the swineherd Simeon is unique —a mixture of ecstatic rapture and daily and hourly contact with animals that makes me sick. But it is "Catholicity" undoubtedly, in one aspect, though it is an aspect that does not appeal to me.

I am in thorough sympathy with you in your conviction of the sacredness of human liberty. It seems to me a kind of sacrilege to trespass on that Holy of Holies — the human conscience. Hence I have been for the last few months here in Ireland in a state of silent fury against the insolent domination of the Irish Parliamentary Party and their attempt to stamp out all political freedom. At last, I was forced to speak, and I send you two articles on our political situation, and in favor of a new movement to establish political liberty and break down the barriers between Protestants and Catholics in this country. But, whilst I would resent any attempt to interfere with my principles or convictions in political or social matters, or to restrict my freedom in any way, whenever the Eternal speaks (and every day I am becoming more overwhelmed with a sense of His Omnipresence) either through direct inspiration or through the Vicariate He has established on this little planet of ours, I am a little child; or as Pasteur said:

"I have the faith of a Breton peasant; and, if I live much longer I shall have the faith of a Breton peasant's wife."

You will smile at all this. No matter . . .

The infirmities of age are creeping down on myself and I am becoming more home-tied every day, working on and trying to get in as much useful travail as I can before the night falls. It would (be) the rarest of all pleasures to see you; but you are right to economise your strength, and yield to the physical inertia which your mental expenditure induces. . . .

Very sincerely, my dear Dr. Holmes,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

From abroad he received many tempting invitations to contribute to the popular journals and magazines on topics of interest to observers of the religio-political conditions in Ireland. McClure's and others, in America, had sought by generous offers to induce him to write for their pages. These offers he uniformly refused. His reluctance to seize such opportunities for appealing to a well-disposed public did not arise from any disinclination to write. But he felt that it was necessary to conserve his strength for the work he had in hand. For a like reason he declined to write for Catholic journals outside the circle to which he was already pledged. On April 27, 1909, he writes:

The Sacred Heart Review has asked a weekly letter from Ireland from me. I could send it some interesting papers from time to time; but I fear that anything new appearing in a Boston journal would possibly hurt the popularity of *Dr. Gray*. So I have put the question by for the present.

XI

POLITICAL CONVICTIONS

FROM what has been said so far of Canon Sheehan's political opinions the reader will conclude that he was as keenly sensitive to the injuries done to his people by an unsympathetic government as he was cognizant of the justice that called for their correction and atonement. But he had also learnt that nothing could be gained, whilst much might be lost, by violent opposition. He had seen and sympathized with those generous patriots who had sacrificed their lives in the untutored effort to avenge the wrongs done to a noble but materially weakened people. Prudence, every law of order and humanity, priestly charity, and the mission of peace imposed on him by the Good Shepherd whose flock he was feeding and guarding, dictated a policy of conciliation equally honorable and much more profitable than righteous but futile resistance.

In order to set forth with effect the basic principles of this policy of conciliation it was necessary to have free access to, if not control of, an organ that could and would allow him to speak fearlessly, if honestly, to the general public. Such an organ was opened to the Canon in the *Cork Free Press*. On the day of his death that journal recalled the fact that the people of Ireland were largely indebted to this humble priest for having inaugurated the peaceful settlement that had brought the "Wyndham Act" to a successful issue. A leading editorial in the paper's very first issue had sounded a stirring trumpet call, in an appeal to the men of the south of Ireland to rally round the standard of conciliation. That article was written by Canon Sheehan. It contains a complete profession of political faith, and throws a good light on his patriotism. But it voices above all his convictions on the

duties of a press free from intimidation and from bribery. It is a splendid composition, apart from its frank argument; and as it does not appear among his collected essays, I need hardly apologize for giving here its main outline.

After directing the attention of his readers to the *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Barry O'Brien, in which are detailed the circumstances of the crises immediately preceding the suppression of Isaac Butt and his party, he points out the similarity of that and the present situation. Then he proceeds:

"We stand very much in like, but somewhat worse, position to-day. Thirty years is a long term in the history of mankind. During these thirty years, other nations have sprung, by leaps and bounds, along the path of progress. In America the population has doubled itself; and all along the prairies to the farthest verge of the Pacific new cities have been founded, new States erected, until the limits of the mighty Republic have become conterminous with Nature's boundaries. England has grown in wealth and population and Imperial power. Her colonies have expanded into Republics, utilizing their own resources and finances for ever-new measures of public utility. Germany has grown into a Colossus; and a semi-barbarous nation has leaped to the front, not only as a military power, but even as a civilizing influence over half the East. We are comparing small things with great — a little island in the North Atlantic with mighty empires. But is it so small? Is not that little island the cradle of the world-wide race? But alas! Whilst her children are building up the fabrics of kingdoms and republics over half the world, she remains in a condition of torpor and stagnation, her life-blood welling out in the open sore of emigration, her towns decaying, her population diminishing at the rate of a million a decade, her vast resources undeveloped, her faculties paralyzed, and her outlook as gloomy and melancholy as at any most disastrous period in her chequered history. We are such mendicants and paupers that we are effusively grateful for small mercies; but whatever we have gained

during those thirty years would now seem about to be filched from us in the shape of extra taxation imposed on us by the votes of Irish representatives. There have been energy and suffering enough wasted in Ireland during the last quarter of a century to have built up the Roman Empire; and the question now is whether, after all this, we are to be content with finding nothing but a heap of Dead Sea Ashes in our hands. Let us consider a little.

"The sum total of our political profits in thirty years is — if we except the few crumbs of Land Bills that were flung by Dives to the Lazarus at his gates, and one abortive Home Rule Bill — a Labourers' Act, paid mostly from Irish rates, a National University, which appears to be hectic from its birth, and one solid Act, which has turned 200,000 tenant-farmers of Ireland into peasant proprietors. What have these cost; and where have they been fought for? They have cost thirty years of tumult and agitation; an expenditure of probably a million of money in subsidies from Ireland and America, untold suffering by eviction, imprisonment, exile, and death. But, where and by whom have even these measures been fought for, and wrested from an unwilling and hostile government? On the Irish hill-side, in the prison, in the workhouse; but not by any means by the torrential eloquence that poured in a flood across the floor of the House of Commons; nor in the tournaments of painted laths, which we know were so amusing to the English House of Commons as to afford materials for cartoons for the English comic journals to this day. Parnell foresaw all this, and declared more than once that Irish liberties and Irish rights were to be fought for and won, not in Westminster, but in Ireland. Even the mighty engine he commanded — the solid phalanx of 80 Irish votes, that were to be flung into the scales when the two English parties equalised, with a 'Vae Victis' to the party that would not concede the last fraction of Irish claims — has been a melancholy failure. Only once was that omnipotent weapon put into requisition. Whatever has been won, has been won by the sacrifice of the Irish people at

home; by their terrible and stern determination to end, once and for all, the appalling condition of things that obtained; and the largest and most bountiful measure of all was won by the exchange of a few words over a green baize table in Dublin between Irishmen who had at last begun to perceive that Ireland's problems could only be solved by herself, and that Ireland's salvation could only be worked out by Irish hands.

"From a purely utilitarian standpoint, therefore, it is clear that our work is only commencing; that much remains to be done that has not been done; that a great deal that has been ill done remains to be well done; and that, above all, the grand objective of Irish National aspirations, Home Rule, which, under the stress of Parliamentary eloquence, has become a mere phantom, dragging the Irish race through quagmire after quagmire of political trouble, and which now has almost thinned away to vanishing point, must be brought back and reduced, under the concentrated action of the people, to a concrete and tangible reality. A heavy task for the generation that is just now passing through.

"But this is not all. The rising generation of Irishmen has only been saved from the dreary fate of absolute scepticism by that marvellous instinct of emotional patriotism that has protected our race for 600 years. Everything they see around them when they emerge from the schools, which, under our unhappy systems of education, tend to stifle and destroy every germ of patriotism in the youthful mind, would seem to teach that patriotism is now reduced to a practical system, in which self-interest has displaced that higher ideal of sacrificing everything for the common weal; and the still higher ideal of laboring and suffering for the motherland. The great Irishmen of the past, in whom, as they stood in the dock, Isaac Butt, a Protestant, and in one sense an alien, discerned the most perfect disinterestedness, the keenest sense of honour, the spirit of self-immolation, and the most absolute love of truth; those patriots of the past, whose motives were sublime, even if their methods were impracticable, are now scorned as

'hill-siders' and 'tinpikers'; and that generous policy that haunted the imagination of Wolfe Tone a hundred years ago; that was accepted 80 years ago by O'Connell as an indispensable factor in his efforts to repeal the Union; which, sixty years ago, Thomas Davis preached with his own marvellous eloquence and sincerity; and which, thirty years ago, Parnell accepted in his famous truism, 'Ireland needs the services of every one of her children,' is now derided as a fancy only fit for the distorted imaginations of Bedlamites. Every principle of Nationality is now subverted; all the teachings of the nineteenth century, and of its golden periods — '98, '48, and '67 — are voluntarily discarded; political expediency has taken the place of political morality; and men shrug their shoulders to-day at events and words and works and toils, that at one time evoked the enthusiasm of the entire nation. No wonder that the young men of our generation look on in blank amazement; no wonder they ask for some guidance — some voice that will tell them whither we are tending; some new and powerful influence that will keep the flame of patriotism from dying down into dead ashes in their hearts. It is well known to the writer of these lines that such is the case. Dazed and bewildered in the tempestuous politics of to-day, looking in vain to blind leaders of the blind, they have to turn away in a kind of despair, and ask themselves, 'Where is the truth, if truth exists at all?' And who is going to sift the true from the evident falsehoods that are current everywhere? The echoes of great words and greater deeds are in their ears; the vision of triumphant Nationality is before their eyes. But din and confusion of contemporary politics dull the one and blind the other, and leave them helpless and bewildered and sceptical. There never was a generation of Irishmen so sorely tried. It is the worst and darkest period of the nation's occultation.

PRINCIPLES OF A FREE NATIONALITY

"Clearly then we must hark backward, and learn once again the principles of a Free Nationality — the first

axioms and original data on which the politics of a nation should be built. We have to get rid of that stupendous frivolity that leaves a people without faith and without aims; and that scepticism that impoverishes the soul and makes it barren; and that superficiality that has filled the land with critics instead of thinkers; punsters instead of poets; scoffers instead of strong, serious, and determined seekers after what is best for individual growth and national progress. And this can now be done only through the Press. The world is growing tired of oratory. Speech falls to-day like the seed upon the stony ground. It is the sheet, the feuilleton, that flutters above the toast and eggs of the aristocrat or the mechanic, or that penetrates the mountain cabin or the village forge, and is read on Sunday by the light of the peat fire, that sways the hearts and moves the convictions of the people. But, if the power of the Press is great, so, too, is its responsibility; and it is nothing short of a crime against the nation and humanity for any great writer to lead the people astray, or seek to debauch their minds and obstruct their advancement by misdirection under the baleful influence of party spirit. And, unfortunately for us Irishmen, there is a traditional difficulty in viewing great political issues dispassionately; and in acknowledging that there is hardly a greater vice than consistency, when it means fidelity to the interests of a party, whilst flouting the dictates of conscience, and the principles of political morality. For it should ever be remembered that morality cannot be separated from politics, nor from anything else; and the man who believes that everything may be sacrificed to political expediency is as immoral as the man who cheats the public on the grounds of commercial necessity.

THE NEW IRISH JOURNAL

"One naturally seeks a motto, or rather a guide word, marking the aims and methods of a new journal like this. It is not far to seek. There are not many incidents in our history so dramatic as that which took place in Green

Street Courthouse on that day when the Crown Prosecutor arraigned the proprietors of the *Nation* on a charge of treason-felony and seditious publication, and read out an article and a poem as treasonable, adding, 'The writer of these lines was afraid to give his name.' At that moment, a lady, dressed and veiled in black, stood up in the gallery overhead, and, lifting her veil, said simply, 'It was I who wrote the lines over the name of "Speranza"!' That lady was the wife of Sir William Wilde, leading oculist in Dublin, and chief of Irish antiquarians; the poem was 'The Year of Revolutions'; the lines in that poem which we suggest for selection are: —

> God, Liberty, Truth! How they burn heart and brain!
> Those words, shall they burn, shall they waken in vain?

"These words may be taken to symbolize and even limit the aspirations of a new Irish journal. Religion — to be protected and defended within these four seas of Ireland from all outer contamination; and especially from that Socialistic wave that just now is sweeping over Europe, and threatening to submerge England; Liberty — of speech and thought and action, subject to the laws of the Church and State; Truth — to be upheld at any cost, in its integrity; to be spread abroad, at any cost, in all its naked majesty! That is a fair programme. Let us dwell on one or two points.

THE PRINCIPLE OF LIBERTY

"If there be one thing more than another which has escaped the solvent and destructive influences of this cynical age, it is the principle that individual liberty is the highest natural prerogative that God has given to man — a privilege that ought to be defended even at the cost of life. It was for this that martyrs shed their blood; it was for this that confessors went to prison, chanting the eternal theme, that liberty is indestructible so long as the spirit survives. Stone walls cannot stifle it, nor chains control it, nor iron bars limit its greatness, even if they obstruct its operations. Now, it is not too much to say that our

fellow-countrymen have voluntarily abdicated and dethroned that individual freedom for thirty years or more. Under a subtle plea they have been induced to place their social and political freedom in pledge to an individual, a clique, or a party. In the beginning in order to cement the forces that were fighting behind Mr. Parnell, such abandonment of human liberty might have been defensible, although even then many minds revolted at the idea of an autocracy, irresponsible and more or less despotic. In many hearts the old Roman spirit survived; and many brave men growled between their teeth even then:

> O, you and I have heard our fathers say,
> There was a Brutus once that would have brooked
> The eternal devil to keep state in Rome,
> As easily as a King.

"But the multitude shouted, unconscious of their self-degradation, and laid down their liberties, never caring to think when that priceless privilege could be picked up again. Since that time, under one pretext or another, this whole nation of ours has been compelled to pass under the Caudine Forks. It has disfranchised itself, with the inevitable consequence that from the very lack of exercise of its political rights, it has sunk into a condition of mental atrophy, where it is unable not only to discriminate between the claims of individuals and parties to its confidence, but even to detect what subtle and dangerous consequences may lie hidden under fair-seeming words. We are told that discipline is necessary to advance the cause of the nation towards finality. So it is. But not the discipline of absolute disfranchisement; not the discipline of the muzzled mouth and the chained hand.

TRUE UNITY NOT SLAVISH!

"There is much talk about unity. Unity by all means. But not the unity of the chained gangs of galley slaves, clubbed or whipped to their bunks at night, but the unity that springs from spontaneous action of a free people, recognizing their own sovereignty, and demanding cohesion

under principle, but not under coercion. And this is now the question of the hour. All other questions — Budgets, Land Purchase, Education, even Home Rule — sink into insignificance before this. Are we free men, or are we slaves in our own land? Has every Irishman who has come to mature age the right of forming his opinion about political questions, or has he not? We are told in the plainest language by the new masters, 'That faction (that is, Liberty) must be crushed out with a strong and merciless hand; that it must be trampled until not an iota of freedom is left us.' What is the tyranny of England compared with this? Are we Irishmen no better than the negroes of South Carolina, or the umbrella-bearers of King Bomba? There was a time, and not so long ago, in Ireland, when this would not be brooked an instant. What would the men of '67 have said to such insolence? They would have met the challenge with a clap of thunder that would have echoed from end to end of the land. For they knew well that a nation that would tolerate such an insult is past redemption. It would be madness to entrust it with self-government, for it is only races of the lowest mentality that engender slaves or tolerate tyrants. The people of Ireland, and the democracy of Ireland, are not so tame as to sit dumb under such a taunt as this. They know that when the hound crouches the whip descends.

THE DEMOCRACY OF IRELAND

"But who are the people, and who are embraced under that word that now bears such momentous significance — the democracy of Ireland? Certainly, it does not mean a section of the people. The very word excludes such a meaning. Certainly it does not mean the predominance of any one class or form of religious belief. No section of population has a right to say any more than the French King, 'The State? It is I!' For, whilst it is morally impossible that there should not be political parties and divided interests in every commonwealth, there should be no barriers against such a combination of forces for the com-

mon welfare as our wisest and greatest thinkers have hoped for, and which has been too long deferred. Patriotism is not the maintenance of the pride and privileges of one class; it is the desire for the common weal, and the readiness to sacrifice personal comforts or prerogatives where the welfare of the community is concerned. And if, as Mr. Parnell so frequently reminded the Irish people, the battles for Irish freedom must be fought on Irish soil, and the outposts at Westminster are practically powerless unless they are sustained from the centre, it is clear there must be a combination of all classes and creeds, first to agree upon, then to formulate, claims that no English statesman would dare to flout when they come from a united people. 'I am not one of those,' said Mr. Parnell, in a certain remarkable utterance, 'who believe in the permanence of an Irish party in the English Parliament. I feel convinced that, sooner or later, the influence which every English Government has at its command — the powerful and demoralizing influence — sooner or later will sap the best party you can return to the House of Commons. I don't think we ought to rely too much on the permanent independence of an Irish party sitting at a distance from their constituencies of Ireland, while we are making a short, sharp, and, I trust, decisive struggle for the restoration of our legislative independence.'

A CAUTION

"We have moved forward a pace since then, so far as power is concerned, but not, alas! in prudence and in the supreme talent of seizing opportunities. We are wastrels and spendthrifts; and like all wastrels and spendthrifts, we take infinite pains to secure what we then fling away as worthless. We were offered the Gladstone University Act, and we rejected it. We obtained the Ashbourne Act, and just as it was about to emancipate the Irish peasant forever, we flung it aside for the phantom of land nationalisation. We took the Wyndham Act, tried it, and just as we found it a measure of supreme utility to our people, we

killed it. We were offered Lord MacDonnell's Act—Home Rule, without the gilt letters, and we contumeliously rejected it; or rather, it was rejected for us by our Directorate. And to cap the climax, Mr. Wyndham, Chief Secretary, seeing the phenomenal issue of the Land Conferences of 1902, made the generous offer, with just a spice of irony, which made the offer more sincere, 'We don't understand you, Irishmen. You are the Green Sphinx. Your riddle is unsolvable by us, or by the Universe. But perhaps you can solve it yourselves. Sit ye down, you, Nationalists, and you, Unionists. And whatever measure you can agree upon between yourselves — be it Land Measures, Local Government Measures, Education, or even Home Rule, I, George Wyndham, promise, with the aid of my Conservative Government, and with the House of Lords at my back, to pass it into an Act of Parliament.' Was the offer accepted? Of course not. We wanted a little more fighting, a little more speech-making, a little more hunting after will-o-the-wisps, a little more blind trusting in the promise, 'To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow!' A little more blundering and plundering. 'Short, sharp, and decisive!' said Mr. Parnell twenty-five years ago. Alas! And we are further than ever from national independence to-day. Verily, there is much truth in the old Roman saying:

Non anser vult velli;
Sed populus vult decipi;
Et — decipiatur!

A goose does not like to be plucked.
But the people like to be deceived.
And let them be deceived!

TRUTH IN JOURNALISM

"Lastly, we have said that truth may be, must be, incorporated in that guide-word that shall determine the working of this paper. Let us commence at once, here on the first page, no matter how unpalatable the truth may be. This Irish nature of ours is a constant subject for amazement. It is the Sphinx-riddle of the world. It is a puzzle even

to ourselves. We are a high-spirited people; and yet we have placed our necks under the yoke of a dictator, or a secret camarilla in Dublin for over twenty years. We are an honourable people, who can brook dishonour. We are a clever people; but we have given to the world at large and to empire-building elsewhere, the genius that should be utilized at home. We are a generous people; and yet we are told we must keep up sectarian bitterness to the end; and that Protestant ascendancy has been broken down, only to build Catholic ascendancy on its ruins. Are we in earnest about our country at all or are we seeking to perpetuate our wretchedness and backwardness by refusing the honest aid of Irishmen? Why should we throw into the arms of England those children of Ireland who would be our most faithful allies, if we did not seek to disinherit them? A weaker brother disinherited by a stronger will naturally be his enemy, not his ally. Do we suppose for a moment that any English electorate, Whig or Tory, Radical, Socialist, or Conservative, will grant autonomy to Ireland, until it is assured that the rights of the minority shall be safeguarded and respected? Do we think that protestations of toleration on our part will be accepted, if the minority keep aloof, and maintain a suspicious silence? Do we hope that that minority will ever again speak, until it is generously invited into the nation's councils? And see what we are losing. It is from the Protestant minority that every great Irish leader for 150 years, except O'Connell, has sprung. It is that minority which has given us our greatest orators, our greatest statesmen, our leading merchants, our greatest archaeologists, our first linguists, many of our greatest poets. It is the same minority that has given the Empire its greatest statesmen, its most illustrious warriors, its leading colonists.

INFLUENCE OF IRISH GENIUS TO-DAY

"Think what Ireland would be to-day, if all that intellectual energy had been confined and exercised within the limits of Ireland. Think what Ireland would be to-day, if

that stream of genius that has come forth from her schools and universities for the last hundred years had been diverted towards the needs and wants of Ireland, instead of being utilised by other and even hostile nations. But is the stream dried up, and the fountain sealed? No. Not by any means. There never was such intellectual power in Ireland as there is at this moment. It is everywhere. For Ireland's sake let us give it a fair chance! It is not true that our Protestant brethren are hopelessly alienated from Ireland. It is not true that they are any longer an English garrison. No power on earth can persuade us that a class which has given us such prodigies of genius as the first half of the nineteenth century did — genius, too, always devoted to the cause of Ireland, has been smitten with sudden barrenness. There must be in Ireland to-day many silent, yet worthy, successors of the Lord Plunket, who declared in the peroration of his great speech against the passing of the Act of Union, 'I shall resist it to the last gasp of my breath, and the shedding of the last drop of my blood; and when the hour of my dissolution is at hand, I shall take my son, as Hannibal of old, and make him swear on the altar of God, that he too, to the last drop of his life-blood, shall resist the invaders of his country's liberties.'

"For our country's sake let us not despise or alienate such generous help as is now offered. It is absurd to suppose that a nation which excludes from all political fellowship one-third of its population, representing half its wealth and intelligence, can make any progress towards independence or prosperity. Thirty years' failure of such policy ought to have convinced the nation by this time that Home Rule is absolutely unattainable without the consent of our Protestant fellow-countrymen; and it needs no great forethought to understand how unworkable a Parliament would be without their coöperation. We have already advanced a decade into the twentieth century; and whilst all the young nations of the earth are singing their songs of hope and victory, here we are wailing out our desolation in the ears of a tortured world, rattling our alms-box, and

exhibiting our Lazarus sores to the nations. Once, and for all, let us stand on our feet like men. Let us call in and embody all the forces at our disposal. Let us no longer alienate the sympathies of our fellow-countrymen, and fling them into the arms of England. Let us no longer expatriate many brave young hearts that would gladly give their lives for Ireland. Ireland needs the services of all her children; and it will be a crime against the motherland and humanity if just at this auspicious moment we decide to prolong the bitterness and disunion of centuries, rather than accept with fraternal cordiality the generous offer of wealth, and talent and power, moral and intellectual, such as probably no other race can produce, and entrain into the service of Ireland energies hitherto dissipated in fratricidal strife or lent to other nations who would gladly make Ireland the footstool of their feet forever.

"England owes her world-wide power, her Imperial supremacy, to her supreme talent of attracting and assimilating even the most hostile elements in her subject races. Hindu and Malay, Canadian and Australian, Celt and Saxon, Norman and Dane, all are harnessed to her triumphal car. Ireland, alas! has had the talent of estranging and expelling her own children, and turning them, like disinherited and dishonoured heirs, into her deadliest enemies. It is time that all this should cease, if we still retain the ambition of creating a nation; and if we prefer our national independence to the rancour and bitterness of sectarian strife, and the material advancement of our country to the dismal futility of nursing those passions and prejudices that have hitherto thrown back one generation after another of Irishmen into political methods that were reactionary; and social schisms and cleavages that make life one long sorrow to every patriotic and disinterested man."

XII

"THE INTELLECTUALS" — ATTEMPTS AT DRAMA

THE *Intellectuals* was a departure from Canon Sheehan's usual style of literary work; and yet it shows a fresh development of his unique aim. The book was meant to fill one of the gaps in his scheme for the promotion of the social and political reorganization of Ireland as an independent nation. The subtitle, "An Experiment in Irish Club-Life," indicates the particular purpose of the volume. It introduces several persons who combine to form a social club. The original membership includes a Catholic and a Protestant, an Irishman, an Englishman and a Scotchman. They represent various types of the social organism, and are further differentiated by their vocations — the man of affairs, the thinker, the scientist, and the professional man. The first program excludes women from membership in the Club. But since the object is to elicit the expression of various opinions and sentiments within the bounds of polite conversation, the motion for female representation eventually prevails, and adds a tint of romance to the story. The author further explains his object in the preface: "To show that there are really no invincible antagonisms amongst the peoples who make up the commonwealth of Ireland, no mutual repugnances that may not be removed by a freer and kindlier intercourse with each other."

The book, in connection with Canon Sheehan's other writings, shows that he meant quite systematically to solve the problems of how to secure Ireland's self-government. The first step had been an effort to gain a favorable hearing for his argument. Next he endeavored to educate those whom he had disposed to listen to him by pointing out to them the evils that must be removed at home, and those

from abroad against which the people are to be prepared. In order to make his work not merely critical but also constructive, he suggested for peaceful adoption practical methods and useful lines of action. Finally, in the present book, he had set himself to answer the objections that might be made to an acceptance, at least tentatively, of a *modus vivendi* under existing conditions, for the diverse elements of the Irish race.

The Intellectuals was not originally intended for serial publication in a magazine, but the editor of the *Irish Rosary* prevailed on the author to allow him the privilege. Only about half of the instalments were thus issued; for it soon became clear that the class of readers to which the *Rosary* magazine appealed at the time was not that particular type which Canon Sheehan had in mind when writing his *Sunetoi*, under which title the work originally appeared. The following letter shows what he thought of the matter:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
September 29, '10.

DEAR FR. RUSSELL,

As we say down south: "You have always the pleasant word!" and your kind remarks about "The Sunetoi" come in very pleasantly just now, when Fr. Coleman has decided to suspend, or rather, terminate the series in his Magazine. You will see by the enclosed letter that the serial is not popular with his readers; and he seems to think that the "Irish Rosary" is in jeopardy, if it is continued.

I confess I foresaw all this; and that it was with much reluctance, and only at his repeated solicitations, I placed the MS. in his hands. I gave him abundant time to read over the MS. carefully before finally accepting it. Not that I have any blame for him. As he rightly says, the interests of the magazine should not be imperilled. One good effect follows — that I can bring out the book now at Xmas or the New Year, instead of postponing publication to mid-summer. There are 37 Sessions in all; only 18 have appeared.

I am quite incorrigible about such words as "morn" and "pearl." Miss Emery pointed out the misdemeanour before. It is the "Cork Accent" which rattles and rolls the "r's."

I have just had a cordial invitation from Dr. Maurice F. Egan to the American Legation at Copenhagen! And it costs me infinite effort to go outside my parish even for a day! You say: How many minds I have influenced already! I hope for good; because as the night draws on, we are thrown ever more inward and inward in self-examination; and I can only say that my intentions were always upright and sincere, in trying to lift the minds of men to higher levels of thought, through the medium of literature. How far I have succeeded, cannot yet be known.

I am, dear Fr. Russell,
Ever sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

If *Sunetoi* failed to attract the average reader, there were others of the clientele of the *Irish Rosary* who, realizing the chief purpose of the symposium, keenly enjoyed the spirited contest of mind with mind displayed among the intellectuals of Canon Sheehan's Irish Club. This appears from the following comment:

41 GROSVENOR ROAD, WESTMINSTER EMBANKMENT,
March 14th, 1911.

DEAR CANON PATRICK,

You gave me many interesting hours with the *Sunetoi* in the *Rosary*, but it was a great pleasure to live those hours all over again in the book. The study of your psychological phenomena (if I may use two such Greek jawbreakers) has always a profound interest for me — we live in so very much the same eremitical atmosphere, for you can find the Lybian Desert quite as easily in London as in Doneraile.

Nearly everything you depict as to the friendly mingling of races and creeds would be possible if you could only realize your first postulate — viz. that a tolerant and sympathetic minded Irish priest should be the inspiring force of the reunion. Alas and alas! that postulate is the one hardest to supply. The bishops, and priests in general, in place of playing that glorious part are (unconsciously of course) the principal force in making the enemies of peace and National Regeneration supreme. However, as long as there is even *one* Fr. Dillon (and there are a good many) we must never despair of his wisdom and noble courage sooner or later taking hold of his brethren.

In fact the best lesson of life (although one of those that gets harder the longer we spend in learning it) is never to despair of anything. "Intellectuals," if they are worth their salt, must begin by making the best of the fact, that whatever "happiness" the best minds can hope to have in this world must rather be derived from the happiness they *give* to the non-intellectuals than from what they can hope to receive in return.

And it is in your power to give to our young people in large draughts an inspiration as wonder-working as your ministrations at a deathbed and far more so than a doctor's drugs. But it must be on the conditions on which all fine influences must be erected viz. —

> O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,
> Groan'd inly while he taught ye peace, and died while ye were smiling.

You plead truly that this or that essay of the *Sunetoi* must not be taken for your own doctrine. Quite rightly in the atmosphere of the Sunetoi Club; but with wavering minds like those of many of our young folks, the right doctrine should be singled out and resolutely and clearly insisted upon. And we should be made clearly to feel that mere dreaming may as often as not be mere laziness of mind and body (all the worse if we dignify it by the cloudy name of Religion) and that the despondency which too often saps our power of initiative is above all else a cowardice in the battle of life, as ignominious as that of the runaway on the morning of a Waterloo.

Don't think I am going to climb into the pulpit myself. I am only too happy to "sit under" those who can dispense good cheer for the troubles of this world, and a hope in a juster one to come. But you have incontestably the gift and I think the mission of doing this for a young Irish generation sadly lacking in self-confidence or the courage to face the great task of life undauntedly, and failing better, I am certain the *Free Press* gives you the ear of a great many hundreds of "Intellectuals" as well as of tens of thousands of honest "Non-Intellectuals" or "Semi-Intellectuals."

With kindest wishes from us both,
My dear Canon Patrick,
Your affect. old friend,
WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

The book was issued during the spring of 1911 under its present title.

DONERAILE, CO. CORK,
January 3rd, 1911.

DEAR FR. RUSSELL,

I am very busy correcting final proofs of *The Intellectuals*, the name (according to Mr. Longman's wish) under which the *Sunetoi* is to appear at the end of the month. It should form a handsome volume.

Do you know anything of a writer named William Smith, the author of "Thorndale" and a book called "Gravenhurst"? I found a review of "Thorndale" many years ago in "The Critical Essays of a Country Parson" and I procured the book immediately after. It has been a favorite volume of mine; but on account of some scepticism that was incidentally introduced, I forebore mentioning the book in any of my writings. But I am anxious to know something of the author. I wrote to Blackwood, his publisher; but they referred me to the National Library at Dublin. Once I came across the name merely in the "Life of G. Eliot"; but I can get no further information. Yet I think he must have been a singular man; and in some way, his name is associated in my mind with his sister's: —

WILLIAM AND MARY SMITH

With all good wishes for the eventful year that is stretching out before us,

I am, dear Fr. Russell,
Always sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN.[1]

In the following letter accompanying a presentation copy of the volume to Mr. Justice Holmes at Washington, Canon Sheehan once more defines the purpose he had in writing it:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
March 25, 1911.

DEAR DR. HOLMES,

I hardly expected that you would find time from your judicial work to cast your eyes over "The Intellectuals"; and I am greatly

[1] The William Smith referred to in the above is an English novelist and playright who died in 1872 at Brighton. His two books, *Thorndale* (1857) and *Gravenhurst* (1862) are of the "philosophical romance" order. His peculiarly critical style bears out the Canon's surmise that he was a singular man. Mary Smith, his wife, wrote a *Memoir* of him in 1872. For a time he wrote under the pseudonym of "Woolgatherer."

pleased that you do not dislike the book. "Index" *Approbatur!* because I know that you think in a complex and involved manner, whereas this book had to deal with platitudes, and I am afraid in a way too transcendental for the multitude, and not academic enough for the learned. I intended it to be an *Eirenicon* between the rather furious parties into which the Irish life is divided; but here again I am not oversanguine, because the book will not be read except by a few, whose tastes and sympathies have already placed them beyond the zones of political antagonism. It is an unhappy and distracted country; and the one thing which hitherto saved it — a certain kind of Celtic idealism — has now given way before the advance of materialism.

At the end of the letter in a note he adds:

I am taking a liberty in sending you by Book Post this evening my own copy of "Dante" — the companion of my holidays. I have unfortunately made pencil marks here and there; but they will only amuse you. It is a pretty and portable edition; and perhaps it had not reached your side of the Atlantic. Don't trouble to acknowledge: but keep it *in pignus amicitiae.*

ATTEMPTS AT DRAMA

At intervals during the previous year Canon Sheehan had made some essays at what he terms "A Drama of Modern Life" under the title of *Lost Angel of a Ruined Paradise.* He intended it to be presented by school girls, and in particular for the benefit of the Sick Children at the Temple Street Hospital, Dublin. The proceeds of the performance of the play and the sale of the volume were to aid in the erection of their new Convalescent Home. The dramatic setting is not at all conventional. It consists of thirteen scenes named by their contents and representing the vocational attraction of some young girls who have just left school. Few of the Canon's critics seem to have liked it. Father Russell discouraged future attempts in the same direction as a deviation from the Canon's settled path in literature. He asks:

Is Melpomene the dramatic Muse? I hope she won't get hold of you, no matter what praise your "Drama of Modern Life" may

win. Rosa Mulholland tried two or three plays — with such a moderate success that she happily gave up the attempt. I explained it by the fact that the drama cuts off all mere descriptions, shrewd comments and other little things that true story tellers (like the author of *Marcella Grace* or the author of *My New Curate*) delight in. But probably, like Tennyson and his "Queen Mary," you prefer the "Lost Angel of a Ruined Paradise" to your stories. If so, you are greatly mistaken.

You want me to go back to the city. *J'y suis et j'y reste.* I follow your example and your counsel. We may thank the solitude of Doneraile for a good deal of your work. My last discovery is your sermon in the *Homiletic Monthly*. You certainly have a good many irons in the fire. *Prosit!*

Ever yours affectionately,
M. RUSSELL, S.J.

A week later he writes from Dublin:

MY DEAR CANON SHEEHAN,

I have just read through your "Drama of Modern Life." I think you have toned down Eva in the railway carriage a little. I have only seen one newspaper criticism (was it *The Freeman?*), and I have heard no *viva voce* comments yet. You must not expect the enthusiasm that greeted former works; but we cannot expect to get "New Curates" every day.

Now mind! the holier you are and the more Irish, the better literature comes from you; and some of your best resources are cut off by the dramatic form.

Rosa Mulholland tried two or three little dramas which were not by any means Rosa Mulholland at her best. So you see I am rude enough and sincere enough to qualify my welcome for your new book.

I hope you are quite strong.

Ever affectionately yours,
MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

PASTOR OF DONERAILE — 1898

XIII

THE CANON AT HOME

BEFORE speaking of Canon Sheehan's last clerical novel, in which he unconsciously reflects heart struggles of an earlier time, let us take a passing glance at him as he appears in his literary workshop.

No one who met the pastor of Doneraile casually would from his appearance suspect that he was the man who introduced the genial, whole-hearted Irish parish priest "Daddy Dan" in *My New Curate* to the literary world. On the whole he left on his visitors the impression of an habitually silent, distant, formal disposition. In stature rather tall and erect, his slightly angular figure harmonized with the lines of his serious countenance. There was a certain refinement about him and an air suggestive of the student. His speech, in a clear voice, had a modulated though in no wise artificial accentuation; and his pronunciation was that which one hears in English academic circles more often than in Ireland. Those who had read his novels would, on seeing him at first, be apt to think rather of Dr. Gray, the rigid observer and enforcer of law in the parishes of Doonvarragh, Lackagh and Athboy, than of the lovable pastor of Kilronan. He was self-possessed and deliberate in his movements, and the slight tremor of the hands, indicative of nervousness, was due mainly to pain, from which he suffered almost constantly during the later years of his life. But when the Canon received a visitor in the presbytery the distant and courtly dignity of his manner quickly took on the glow of priestly cordiality. His extraordinary gift of conversation, based on his ability to enter into the viewpoint of those with whom he spoke, and his wide range of information, would soon reveal a wholly different man from what the outer shell suggested. He drew one's heart

to him in some inexplicable manner which no doubt furnishes the reason why his own people and especially the children knew him only as "Father Pat." The writer recalls how, on the occasion of a visit to him in 1908, his casual apology for the absence on a Friday of what he considered choice fish for dinner, led readily to the discussion of the economic problems that harass Ireland, and which were to him issues of real moment. I had expressed some astonishment at his remark about the lack of fish. Could there be any such want in Ireland, the favored spot in all the world, where the finest trout disported itself in the brook at his very door? For here was the Awbeg; and not far away its sister streams, the Allow and Fanshion, which were fed by the rich falls of the Blackwater; and beyond in the hills were the Suir, the Barrow and Nore meandering through the deep valleys; and were there not numerous bights all along the southern Atlantic coast from Dingle in the west to Dublin Bay in the east, where trawlers were netting rich stores of sea food? Why surely it was Ireland that supplied almost three-fourths of the best salmon and trout, not to speak of brill and soles and turbot and plaice, haddock, whiting, bass and red mullet, for all the fish marts of the British Isles.

"Precisely," he answered, "and if it were not for the district statutes with their inspectors, police and coast guards, their rate and license duties, by which they restrict the rights of private property on water as well as on land, we should enjoy a very rich harvest from river and sea. But British law effectually controls not only the trawling and net industry, but line fishing also. We catch the fish, and then it is boxed, labeled, and packed off to Dublin or to Billingsgate; whence we buy it back for our tables, somewhat less fresh and a trifle dearer on account of the transport and official budget."

But we had very palatable fish for all that; and the sauce was spiced by the conversational graces of the Canon. The keynote of this comments turned upon the American invasion of the Irish industries. "America gives the

Irishmen work, makes them rich, — abroad. America also feeds a large part of the Irish people more comfortably at home than it had been possible before the exodus. America sends, apart from the money that comes from relatives in the States and Canada, its commercial products, grain, maize, canned meats and vegetables, at a rate at which we could never produce them in Ireland or England. Free trade makes all that possible; and it seems a benefit. But in reality it is a blight on Ireland's energy — Ireland looking toward freedom."

"But," I objected, "were not the Americans who had emigrated from Ireland actually promoting emancipation by supporting the Irish agitation for self-government; making constant and effectual propaganda through the press, in its behalf: furnishing to the Irish Parliamentary Party the financial aid that was required for organizing purposes, etc.?"

"Yes. But while they are doing all these things they lower the moral standard by which we seek emancipation; they withdraw the manhood and maidenhood of Ireland to distant parts where the untutored youth is taught that money is the chief object of labor; where our lads are led to prostitute their noblest energies to earn dollars whilst they are being familiarized with the vices of modern civilization, and filled with admiration for an artificial and temporary prosperity; where they lose in large measure that simplicity of faith, that attachment to religion and the Church, which their brethern and they themselves had helped to build up in the New World, even whilst they were gradually abandoning its practices amid their striving after success. Above all, the wealthy Irish American is raising a generation that learns not merely to forget the old land of their fathers, but to become ashamed of it; to imitate the manners and fashions, and last of all the vices and infidelity of the great body of Americans who recognize no definite faith; and who make civic virtue their sole religion, secular training their sole education, and worldly success the standard of all their attainments." America, as he saw it, is a land

where home life is being systematically destroyed, "not merely by separating its members from the hearth, but by the practice of race suicide and economic devices that tend to decrease the family." These things, he thought, were going on slowly but they were going on, to the loss of Irish loyalty, Irish faith and Irish virtue; and with that loss would come a deterioration of the intellectual as well as the moral standard of the race. Those who remained at home, and who were not dying of inanition or old age, were being tainted by bad influences from abroad.

There was no bitterness in what the Canon said, but an inexpressible tone of sadness; and I could not but think that what he feared was largely true.

After dinner we adjourned to his den. He had already shown us the surroundings of his presbytery, the garden and his favorite nooks where he wrote the best that has come from his heart and mind. There was a remarkable air of order and English tidiness about everything in and around the house. No token of luxury or self-indulgence; on the contrary, a certain severity everywhere, excepting perhaps in the dining room. Yet it was all extremely attractive, much like a bit of fresh forest-preserve with its tall and straight trees, well trimmed to shelter and to please. Although everything reflected the habits of the student and of refined taste, there was no great display of books. The upper room, fitted up as a library, contained only a meager selection of volumes. But they were choice in quality — English, French, German, Italian. There were a small desk and, I think, three comfortable chairs.

Before turning to the subject of his writings, I suggested the possibility of his arranging to go with me to America. It would not be necessary to announce his intention to the public, or even to make known his identity at his arrival, as the author of *My New Curate*. When he had completed his observations, and gathered, unbiased by any prepossessions, sufficient material for a clerical novel in an American setting he might drop his *incog*. Priests were pretty much alike the world over in their fundamental traits, aims, and

occupations. They differed in their habits, in their manners, in their methods of carrying out their evangelical message. The differences were determined by their surroundings. And the surroundings could be studied; they would be easily diagnosed in their essential features provided one was free from the danger of being imposed upon by superficial impressions or by what people arranged for his entertainment chiefly. Moreover the proposed visit would tend to alter some of his prepossessions about the corrupting influences of which he had just spoken as prevalent in American public life.

He had listened very quietly to the end. Then he shook his head; rather sadly. "It is what I have had in my mind and much desired; but it is too late. My health is in truth very poor. I cannot bear to travel any distance now, and I must content myself with remaining at home — where indeed my heart is. I have a very good people, ah — and the children!"

We then talked about his parish. He had accomplished the one object for which he set out when he became a pastor; although he had not formulated his aims so definitely then as he could do now when he saw life in retrospect. The farmers of his district, who had been tenants and had labored like their fathers, generation after generation, to enrich the landlords, were now the proprietors of the soil. Each family had its own home, which could be improved, and where people were free from the molestations of the land agents or the fear of eviction that had so often harassed them of recent years. There was not a single tenant in his parish who had not assented to the Purchase Act, and who was not paying off the instalments toward the ownership of his farm in place of rent. That was a great comfort to the Canon. It had been chiefly his work. And it opened new opportunities to do for his people what he could not have done for them under any other circumstances. He could say: "Michael, build a fence round your house; and put up a sty for the pigs instead of letting them grub in the kitchen; plant flowers in front of the house, and let Lizzie

put clean bibs on the children when they go to school." And he would not meet the reply: "What's the use, your Reverence; it would only raise the rint on us."

Time sped amid these interesting sidelights of the Canon's activities. But I had come to obtain, if possible, fresh material for the *Ecclesiastical Review*. When I broached the subject he alertly arose, and, reaching to his desk, took out a packet of manuscript, the kind with which I had become familiar through the past years.

"Here," he said, "is what I have been working on for some time. It will probably be the last thing I shall be able to do. For I feel my time on earth is measured; and I am a bit weary."

It was the manuscript of *The Blindness of the Very Reverend Dr. Gray*. There was another title to it. The inscription on the first page read:

"THE FINAL LAW"

I looked over it. The same careful writing, marking of periods, division of paragraphs and titles, as though it were a fair copy of a well corrected original. But he had no duplicate or notes. It was just as he had written it each successive day when at rest from his pastoral toil. There were some chapters to be filled in; but the last was complete. It all looked like a perfect piece of work; for he wrote as he spoke, with the same measured and calculated finish, and yet with those touches of deep emotion which seem to preclude anything like deliberation.

That was indeed his marvelous power. He had stored his mind by careful reading in earlier years. He had trained it to accurate reasoning, and he had sedulously practiced the art of expression. Now all composition was easy to him. He might have to look up a fact, or a date, or verify a source in some volume with which he was familiar, or in an encyclopedia; but he knew where to find what he wanted; and he knew how to group his thoughts to advantage so as to make a true picture and teach a useful lesson.

He permitted me to look through the first chapter while

he occupied himself with my companion. Then I asked him to read me a chapter of his own choosing; which he did with wonderful effect and a certain solemn thrill. It was the chapter in which the blind priest bids farewell to his people, when he discovers for the first time the hidden love that has silently bound them to him for years. I felt convinced that he was rehearsing some episode from his own fruitful life. So it proved to be. The story of Dr. Gray reveals some traits of Canon Sheehan's inner life during the years of his pastorate, down to its approaching end, at the time when we saw him.

The reader will remember the general trend of that remarkable novel. It describes an old priest and his curate. The former, trained in the school of Jansenistic rigor in theology, views all things in the light of law. He takes no account of the weaknesses, the fallacies, the deep-rooted habits of feeling, that determine the actions of men under the stress of custom or passion, of misapprehension or superstitious fears. He goes by the written norm, the unalterable law of God, the rules and canons of the Church. As a result, he becomes outwardly harsh, cold, unsympathetic in manner; and his severity makes his people shy and afraid of him; the intercourse between them takes on that distance and distrust which are the invariable outcome of rigor in a superior. The old priest persuades himself gradually that his people dislike him as well as fear him. But he cannot alter this condition, without offending the law of which he is the jealous keeper; and their constant trespasses convince him that they are not only incorrigible but resentful as well. In this he fails to measure rightly the affections of the Irish people for their priests. They stand in awe of him indeed; but it is because they realize that he is the executive of ideals too high for them to reach.

All the while his untarnished life, his fidelity to the law of God, raises him in their esteem, although his manner forbids their showing it. To all this he is intellectually blind. As time goes on he loses his physical eyesight, and resolves to give up his position as pastor. The dramatic

incidents surrounding his farewell are heightened by the occurrence of a murder in his parish, and by the additional sorrow of the turning from him of a young orphaned niece who elects to go abroad as a professional nurse to an unfortunate boy who has been ordered by his physician to a southern climate as the only means of saving his life. The girl's choice is in the eyes of the aged priest contrary to the old Christian ideas of modesty and prudence, and he sees in her action the cause of scandal to his flock. Beautiful, clever, and well educated in an American convent school, the young woman had been left at her mother's death in charge of her uncle, this priest who knows not compromise. Contrary to all his instincts and principles, he had allowed the child to come to Ireland and reside under his roof. Then she, with American independence, though with no want of loyal respect for her guardian, had adopted the profession of nurse.

"I know that her motives are the purest and holiest in sacrificing herself to accompany a dying boy to far-away Africa. I know that my niece is a professional nurse, and bound to attend patients, high and low, rich and poor. But whatever be thought of these arguments in medical circles and whatever be the new-fangled principles that have come into being these last few years with what is called the progress of science and education, I have to consider the interests of my flock which, at least as yet, has not abandoned the old Christian ideas of maiden modesty and prudence. Hence I gave my niece the alternative of staying at home with me or leaving me forever. She took her choice. And," he said fiercely, "I have cut her image out of my heart forever. She shall never darken my door again. She shall never sit at my table again. She shall never hear my voice. God knows, it is true, I did look forward to the time when she might be a help to me and a comfort in my old age and blindness. The strongest of us will cling to some support in our darkness and descent toward the grave; and I was hoping that in my darkness and sorrow I would have some one near to help me to spend the lonely and sorrowful hours of a blind old age. That is not to be."

He paused; and there was the deepest silence in the church, except for the sobbing of the women, who swayed themselves to

and fro, under the tragic solemnity of the scene, and who broke into loud wailing when the priest's voice faltered as he said: "The strongest of us will cling to some support in our darkness and descent toward the grave." The men looked down, fingering their hats, but their faces were set and pale with emotion.

"And now," said the parish priest, in a softer voice, "I have to announce to you that I am no longer your pastor. I have sent in my resignation to your Bishop, and he has accepted it. I had hoped," he continued, not noticing the increased emotion of the people, "to remain your pastor to the end, because there is a certain human pride or vanity in dying with the honors of one's profession and in harness . . . For twenty-five years I have tried to serve God and you, imperfectly and feebly I know, but yet I think with honesty and sincerity. I can say with St. Paul that I did not covet your gold or silver. Probably you thought I was often exacting about dues; but it wasn't for myself, but because I thought it was a duty I had to discharge. To-day, if my debts were paid, I would not be worth one shilling. In other things too you thought me hard; but it was the hardness of the father that seeks the welfare of his child, and puts his eternal salvation before everything else. Hence I know that I was neither loved nor liked in this parish —"

"You were, you were, yer reverence," cried a woman, passionately sobbing, "but you didn't know the people. You kep' away from 'em, but they loved you in their heart of hearts."

"An' 'tis God Almighty's truth that the woman is afther spakin'," said a farmer, standing up, although his voice shook with the unusual experience of having spoken in a church.

A deep murmur of approbation and sympathy ran through the congregation at these words. It was an inarticulate but eloquent declaration of love and loyalty that a king might envy. It touched the strong man at the altar so keenly that his whole frame shook with emotion, and his trembling hand went fumbling beneath the chasuble for his handkerchief. And when he took out the old red handkerchief, and lifting up the black glasses, wiped those eyes where the light of heaven would never shine again, a low long wail of anguish rose up from the dense mass of people, and many a heartfelt and burning word in Irish reached the ears of the weeping priest.

He goes on to tell them how from the beginning all his hope and ambition had been centered in these few words: "To do God's work, however imperfectly, to serve Ireland, however unworthily."

"Then I thought, perhaps unwisely, that the new generation which had arisen did not understand these things — that there was more selfishness, more cunning, more treachery in these days than in the days that are gone. But somehow little glimpses into the lives of the people, from time to time, made me suspect that perhaps I had misunderstood them; and to-day as I am leaving you, I most humbly ask your pardon and that of Almighty God, if I have formed a wrong judgment about you . . . Forget, as far as you can, my own failings whilst I was here, and be merciful to my memory when I am dead."

The picture of the lonely old priest "whose devotion through life is to law rather than to love, cherishing in his heart a passionate sympathy for the Fenians of his youth," had at least some of the prominent traits of the solitude-loving pastor of Doneraile. But in the story there are touches of deep color reminiscent of other sources whence he caught the inspiration with which he harmonized his own feelings. It contains many exquisite passages, as one of the critics of this volume puts it,[1] "so true and delicate in their analysis as to suggest unconscious biography." I am told that the original of Dr. Gray was a Canon Murphy of Cloyne, long since dead, the echoes of whose somewhat odd but noble disposition have been kept alive among the clergy of his diocese. But, as usual with Canon Sheehan's characters, whilst they take their main features from some definite original, they were developed without reference to the first model. In one respect there is a likeness between Canon Sheehan and his hero. For a time his own parishioners did not understand their pastor or feel attracted to him. They thought him, as did many of his brother priests, too aloof from and out of sympathy with their foibles and ordinary aims. But they gradually came to appreciate rightly his silence. When at length they found him to be

[1] *Dublin Review*, Vol. 147, p. 184.

their truest friend, they half consciously manifested their love for him beneath their timid reverence, and as a result he in turn became more and more enamored of his flock. But of this later on.

Dr. Gray's devotion to law rather than to the spirit of love probably represents a temptation that had come to Father Sheehan during the first years of his pastorate at Doneraile; just as we have him interpret through Father Letheby and Luke Delmege some of his personal experiences and characteristic aims and mistakes while a young curate at Mallow or at Exeter.

The novel is in more than one respect a perfect counterpart of *My New Curate*. The chief figures, the melodramatic situations, the mingling of humor and pathos as they forever change the sky of the Irish heart, all these are there in happy proportion and worked out with a masterful grace and life-like truth.

As the manuscript of the novel was not quite completed, we agreed upon its publication in the following November. The title "The Final Law" did not sufficiently convey the character and form of the serial and was accordingly changed. The following letter refers to the matter:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
Sept. 23, '08.

DEAR FR. HEUSER,

Your letter to hand. I should wish very much to meet your wishes in altering the title; but the one you suggest[1] is somewhat cumbersome and too long; and, as I am sure to be carefully criticised here at home, I should not wish to put the feminine element too prominently forward. It will reveal itself. I feel that a concrete title is best, as you suggest. What would you think of

"The Blindness of Dr. Gray"

It would apply to his physical and metaphysical infirmity. Or:

"Ward and Guardian"

I prefer the former, The latter, I think, has been used.

[1] I had suggested as a tentative and captious title "The Reverend Dr. Gray and his American Niece."

On my return to London I called on Mr. Charles Longman to make arrangements for the publication of the serial in book form after it should have appeared in the *Review*. The first instalment was printed in November, 1907. The novel ran for nearly two years, and was issued as a separate volume at the end of 1909.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

Among other manuscripts which Canon Sheehan had completed at this time were two volumes of *Memoirs*. "These," he said, "will not be published until after my death." He gave me to understand that they contained reflections upon his own work, the difficulties and disappointments that he had encountered, and the mistakes made by himself as well as by his critics. So much I learnt from him at the time. It was a sort of literary testament made in view of the disease that was hastening him to the grave. He alludes to it in a letter to Father Matthew Russell, S.J., some time later, when he appears to have changed his mind regarding its publication.

DONERAILE, *Sept.* 8, 1911.

DEAR FR. RUSSELL,

I am afraid that you will not find these "Memoirs" too entertaining; but there are a few interesting episodes here and there.

They are *not* intended for print at *anytime;* I wrote them about eight years ago just to preserve them for my own amusement. There is another *Fasciculus* dealing with my life in Doneraile and as an author: but it is not complete. . . .

If you are not ambitious enough to reach the century, you will surely surmount the last fence, marked 90.

Always sincerely,

P. A. SHEEHAN.

Two years later, a few days before his death, the Canon called his brother and asked him to go over with him his letters and other papers. These he had already carefully arranged and tied together with notes indicating their dates and contents, evidently with a view to their final disposition. Placing his hand on the Memoirs of his own

life, he said to his brother: "These might do harm to others; let us destroy them." And then and there the volumes of manuscript were thrown into the open grate, while the dying priest watched the red flames as they crept from sheet to sheet and curled to brown and black, until the glow died down, leaving nothing of the pages but the flaky tinder with its edges of ashy gray.

XIV

PROPOSED FOR A BISHOPRIC

ABOUT this time Canon Sheehan received a singular testimony of his widespread popularity. His fame as a writer had in no way obscured the appreciation in which he was held by those who knew what he had already accomplished as the shepherd of his flock, for the report of his pastoral work also had gone abroad. On 17 July, 1909, the administrator and the archpriest of Lismore in New South Wales, Australia, cabled their congratulations to the parish priest of Doneraile, in the name of the Province of Sydney, on his nomination as the "dignior" candidate for the episcopal see made vacant by the death of Bishop Jeremiah Doyle in June of that year. The Australian press described Canon Sheehan as a churchman of world-wide fame, whom the Catholics of New South Wales would proudly hail as their bishop. They did not suspect any more than his parishioners and friends that the busy pastor of the little parish of Doneraile was suffering from an illness that made him steadily look toward death as his next promotion. Undoubtedly the knowledge that his selection could not have been brought about without the approval of his own superiors in Ireland, who thus showed their confidence in his ability, must have been gratifying to him. No less was he pleased with the esteem manifested by those who had chosen him. To the Dean of the Lismore diocese he wrote his acknowledgments:

> The surprise I received at such an unexpected message was hardly equalled by the sense of gratitude towards a body of priests who paid such a compliment to a far-away and unknown colleague.
>
> The honour you would confer on me is one that I shall not attain, and of which I am not worthy. I am now an infirm and feeble man, just able to guide the destinies of a humble Irish parish,

but quite unfitted to preside over a diocese in a new and ever-advancing country. But my sense of the honour you would confer on me is by no means lessened by the sense of my own unworthiness and incapacity, and I have an idea that when I have advanced farther down the declivities of life, and shall be able to measure the paces I have passed through, the one event that shall shine forth as the brightest spot in the past shall be the recognition of a body of priests, separated in space, but akin in race and sympathy.

Meanwhile he took definite steps to prevent the Holy See from accepting his name as a candidate for the bishopric. To Mgr. Keller at Youghal, Vicar General of the Cloyne diocese and his friend of long standing, he wrote a strong appeal, asking him to use his influence with His Eminence Cardinal Logue to frustrate any possible appointment. He stated that the condition of his health would not permit him to accept so important a charge, especially in a missionary district where vigorous activity was required. The Primate promised to use his influence in the desired direction and to place the matter before Cardinal Gotti. In December of the same year Dr. John Carroll, a native of Kilken, was appointed to the See, and Canon Sheehan felt relieved.

In a congratulatory letter to Justice Holmes, on whom Oxford University had shortly before bestowed the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, Canon Sheehan speaks of the proposed Australian promotion:

DONERAILE, *August* 31, '09.

MY DEAR JUDGE HOLMES,

If you were now in Washington, gowned and ermined, and trying to maintain judicial equanimity in an atmosphere of 94° or so, I would not inflict a letter on you. But, seeing that you are happily in undress, and with no responsibility beyond the ordinary human duty of killing time, and strolling on pebbly beaches, and driving through fragrant pine-woods, I cannot forego what is to me a very great pleasure indeed, — namely, to congratulate you on the distinction lately conferred on you by the Oxford Dons.

The fact has raised these latter gentlemen somewhat in my esteem, because it seems to indicate that they have departed from what has been a religious tradition in the British mind, that everything American is very "young" and immature, and still under the benevolent patronage of the mother country. Only quite lately in the "Times" literary supplement, some letters of Swinburne's were published, in which he speaks in a very patronising manner of your Emerson; and again, quite lately, I have been reading the letters of Coventry Patmore in which he ridicules the idea that Longfellow could ever be considered a poet. And I send you herewith a copy of the supplement (Times) in which you will notice a certain tone of British condescension towards American litterateurs, whilst accepting the world's verdict on the "Autocrat." When, therefore, Oxford found *you* out, I am beginning to respect the English intellect a little, and to think that in their own elephantine manner, they are being spurred into line with the thinkers of other nations.

Only yesterday, your name turned up in Doneraile Park. Lady Castletown mentioned that you had been over; but I think they regretted they had not seen you, or that you were unable to visit. Lord and Lady Castletown were much pleased with the Oxford affair.

To drop down to my humble self, I am sure you will be interested to hear that some good priests out in Australia want me to travel 12,000 miles, and to spend the rest of my life with a mitre (far weightier in every way than your wig) governing an immense diocese under a tropical sun. Of course, Rome is too wise to listen to such a suggestion; and I have been selfish enough to use all the machinery I could avail of, to prevent the possibility of such a thing. So I take it as a pretty French compliment and nothing more. But these are the little accidents of life.

I do hope that the Centenary celebration of your revered father will be the success every lover of his books and gentle character expects.

The leaves are beginning to turn here; and our Indian summer is commencing. I suppose you will soon be in the Forum again.

Always most sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

If at any time in his life Canon Sheehan had been actuated by ambition to attain prominence, that feeling had gradually

given way to the altruistic desire of service. He gauged what men call promotion in the ecclesiastical life by its enlarged opportunities to do better work, to use all one's available resources of intellect and general training for the apostolic ministry. Honors might be to a priest a fresh incentive to effort; but as a reward he hardly regarded it at all. "Dominus pars hereditatis meae" was the standard by which he estimated the value of his pastoral office. For the rest, that ministry was meant to be one of labor and sacrifice, a cross to be carried to the hilltop of Calvary, beyond which the angel would point the way to the glory of the resurrection with Christ, the Master and Model of every true priest.

There can be no doubt that at this time he was fully possessed by the thought of death, though a casual visitor would have hardly realized it. He did not cease to work; for labor was part of the program of his preparation for death.

XV

LAST BOOKS

CANON SHEEHAN'S next book was *The Queen's Fillet*. It is a romance cast in the tragic days of the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century. Its underlying aim was, of course, to apply to Ireland the lessons of that mad conflict of an oppressed people, and to warn against such excesses as political uprisings without order and competent leadership bring in their wake. The story takes its title from the fillet worn by Marie Antoinette at the time of her beheading. This fillet or head-band taken from her by the executioner was afterward sold to a French noble, Maurice de Brignon, and became the ransom of Adèle de Brignon, who had been arrested on suspicion of conspiracy against Louis XVIII.

A prominent figure in the story is that of the abbot of St. Marcellin, who acts as the disinterested liberator. The persons, historic events, and scenery lend themselves admirably to Canon Sheehan's particular gift of description, and he is thoroughly successful in his appeal to the moral sense of a liberty-loving people. There are however in the narrative noticeable defects of historical perspective, and inaccuracies in the delineations of such characters as Talleyrand. On the other hand, the beauty of Canon Sheehan's natural style reveals itself in the description of men of heroic temperaments, like André Chenier. The critical reader cannot escape the suspicion that the author here simply put in orderly sequence, and without attention to detail, the material which had been partly elaborated by him at an earlier period; and that he found himself handicapped in giving a finish to the whole by the distractions of pain attending the last years of his life. He felt in a sense under obligation to the public, and was anxious to respond

to their expectations. Moreover he wanted to keep working, if possible, to the end; and as he was unable to fulfil all of his usual pastoral duties, he tried to make up for it at his desk. Altogether the volume was well received by the general public, as he writes:

DONERAILE, *Aug.* 29, 1911.

DEAR FATHER RUSSELL,

Many thanks for special copy of the *I. Monthly*, for your own gracious critique, and for the extracts of notices from the reviewer. They have all been singularly, I might say, surprisingly favourable; and the Americans are even more generous than the English. In a fortnight after publication, 1500 copies of the six-shilling Edition, and 1100 copies of the Colonial Edition had been sold, so everything looks well for the book.

I dare say Hilaire Belloc will differ from the estimate of the leading characters. I think he adopts the Carlylean view that the Revolution was "a truth clad in hell-fire"; and this is partly correct. But how, under any circumstances, its excesses can be condoned is to me inexplicable.

I think I have been fairly impartial all round. I have not spared the *noblesse*, nor the Jacobin, nor the Bourbon, in trying to exemplify my two favourite theories:

(*a*) That injustice begets injustice;

(*b*) That fear has been the cause of the world's greatest crimes.

Always sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

For obvious reasons the Canon particularly appreciated the favorable critique of his friend William O'Brien, who wrote:

MY DEAR CANON PATRICK,

It was only yesterday I could find leisure hours (and pleasure hours) for the perusal of "The Queen's Fillet." It is amazing how prolific your mind is in a half dozen worlds of study, any one of which would be enough for the normal literary life. The new book abounds in noble romance and has something of the strength of the Revolution it describes.

In most other things our aspirations go in the same direction; but I am much more willing to give you "the key of my soul" on

German than on French matters. No doubt many of the French nobles did well — as bravely did the Girondins — but I am satisfied the more deeply you study those views the more certain you are to be convinced that Louis Sixteenth and his worshippers were — in the highest sense — a poor lot, and that the people were not much happier in many of their champions, and that for all the horrors that darkened the lustre of the Revolution's wonderful releasements for the down-trodden people, the peoples' stupid, selfish and brutal monsters were chiefly answerable.

Believe me, the French race for all its faults have still a magnificent reserve of power over the world's future and that the irreligion which is its one great fault, is simply another side of the religion, wrong side out — which surely might have persevered, and may even still persevere, to be the greatest force in the exercise of Christianity. However, I am sure it would take many long and perhaps animated discourses by your friends in Doneraile to induce you to lessen the signal tribute your book pays to a Royal Cause which in death has ten thousand charms for every fervent worshipper of Chivalry and Nobility and of those glorious views which apotheosised Versailles but made the Revolution an inevitable Nemesis.

All the same, I am sure that in the Elysian Fields the Queen and her brilliant Court will feel a pang of pride, that they should still be celebrated so charmingly by a pen like yours.

Believe me, my dear C. Patrick,
With every affect. good wish,
Your old friend,
WM. O'BRIEN.

In a letter to Father Russell, of November 28, 1911, the author again speaks of the criticism called forth by his book. He notes that it was on the whole favorable, but that the non-Catholic press seemed to be more generous toward him than his brethren of the faith. At the end of the letter he writes: "I have a new novel completed; it deals with Socialism in Ireland and many other matters; but I am holding it in reserve." The volume was no doubt *The Graves at Kilmorna*. It was not to be published for some years to come, after the author had passed from the scene of earthly criticism.

"THE GRAVES AT KILMORNA"

It is a story of the rise and suppression of the Fenian insurrection in 1867. Two local heroes form the central figures of the action. Both are earnest lovers of their country, men of swift impulses, native determination, and noble aspirations. In the actual struggle they are defeated, partly through treachery, partly through lack of sufficient foresight. One, James Halpin, is killed in a brief encounter between his men and the English constabulary; the other, having been convicted of treason against the English government, is sentenced to hard labor for life in the Dartmoor prison. After ten years of durance vile he is released. On his return home he encounters some drunken townsmen cheering for the successful Tory candidate at an election. Taught by his own former experience, he peaceably warns them against their pretended friend and meets with a tragic death at the hands of his fellow countrymen.

The novel ends abruptly, and leaves the reader under a sense of hopelessness for the cause of Irish emancipation. On this account some critics have pronounced the story to be pessimistic in tendency. Events since then have demonstrated how accurate was the diagnosis which Canon Sheehan had made of the political agitation in Ireland. If he had no faith in the optimistic promises that had for so long delayed a freedom for which his people had made every conceivable sacrifice, it was not that he lacked either confidence in the better element of Irish patriots, or deep and abiding interest in his people's welfare. On the contrary, no man was more anxious to see Ireland governing herself. We shall see that, so far as his influence reached, he steered the national spirit toward a right and safe course, especially by his proposal of educational and economic reforms. Nor were these efforts merely speculative. He took a personal part in the struggle, and within the circle of his immediate operations brought about actual benefits by the measures he advocated. It was he who negotiated with the landlords for the purchase of the properties which

the tenants in his district had been holding under rent. He thoroughly and permanently improved, as we shall see in a later chapter, the industrial, educational, and economic conditions of his own people, a fact recognized by the town council and the district authorities who have paid the tribute of public honors to him, the leader of the community, quite apart from his calling as priest and pastor.

It is to be remembered also that the chief part of *The Graves at Kilmorna* is not fiction but fact. In the earlier part of this biography certain incidents are related of young Patrick Sheehan's college days which are literally reproduced in his last novel. In truth, nearly all the scenes and characters of the story embody the author's personal recollections. The town of Kilmorna is no other than the town of his birth, Mallow by the Blackwater; the incidents of the Fenian rising are those he had witnessed while a student of St. Colman's College. The two or three priests he mentions are drawn from actual life. The young Devonshire curate who visits Dartmoor prison is himself. Myles Cogan is the hero whom some years later during his temporary chaplaincy in the prison he recognizes among the chain-gang. Agnes, Cogan's sister, who becomes a nun, and Mary Carleton, who causes his arrest in order to save him from death in an attack by the volunteers which she foresees to be futile and fatal — all these are persons who have figured in the life of our author. And so are the wrongs he portrays and the sorrows that consumed him when he realized that his people were being misguided by the fomenting of enemies on the one side, and by the fanatical zeal and sometimes treachery of compatriots on the other.

Canon Sheehan, like most poetic characters of his type, had something of the prophet in his nature. He warns against the danger of an overweening confidence in the value of mere promise and applause. But he is none the less a sincere forerunner of the true liberator. Only those who are blind to facts can fail to realize his deep and ardent patriotism, his high-minded desire to preserve his people's

faith and virtue, on which to build a safe future and a lasting prosperity for Ireland. Indeed, affection for his race, above family and party, is the chief characteristic of this, Canon Sheehan's last book. Had not his vision been so sure, doubtless he would have added to this his swan-song the final note of hopefulness in the immediate resurgence of his people.

A few critics of *The Graves at Kilmorna* thought his account exaggerated as well as discouraging. But the majority recognized its author's penetration and honesty. "However we may disagree with his reading of history," writes the (London) *Saturday Review*, "we cannot deny his power, or his burning sincerity. . . Mr. Sheehan has written a stirring book and has written it with a true art that despises exaggeration or distortion of facts. Certain it is that Ireland of the 'sixties produced fine spirits, men who passionately died for what they believed their country's good. Are they forgotten? Mr. Sheehan's book seems to recall those wonderful words of the prophet of old: Come from the four winds, O breath, and make these dry bones live!" The same writer quotes the words of one of the characters in the novel, which offset the misty sadness of the prophecy: "Be of good cheer; there is an angel watching over Ireland," and asks: "Is there? we wonder. These people are a peculiar people. The mystery of the true Celt hangs about them, nor will it ever be totally extinguished. Their past is a past when kings sat in their halls, and listened to the ancient sagas sung by her long-bearded bards, or of the splendid deeds told by her Seannachies; — an Ireland, sea-girt and green, with an eternal chant rising to heaven from the old abbeys with their vast choirs of monks. And then later an Ireland where the shadow of hunger and want hovers over the people, and where her dreams are nightmares of scaffold and prison. And through it all from time to time the blood of the martyr-patriot calls to heaven."

Another reviewer, from far-away Australia, sees in this book not merely a valuable addition to the most recent Anglo-Irish literature, which holds the interest as fiction and

the attention of the discerning student as a worthy contribution to national history, but also a most truly prophetic utterance. It cites the author's own words: "As the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the saints, so the blood of the patriot is the sacred seed from which alone can spring new forces and fresh life into a nation that is drifting toward decay." And then adds the reflection that, had Canon Sheehan lived but a short time longer, he would have seen in the flesh that "none of his warning was written in vain — none."

We have then in this study a shadow picture; and whilst it is a true one, it is not necessarily one of despair. It is indeed realistic, and its intense feeling conveys a cry of distress and of warning. As such the note of optimism has no place in it. This must be taken into account even when we regard it as a purely literary production. It is a story, tender and tragic, penetrated through and through with an impassioned devotion to the motherland that consumes the Irish heart and leaves behind it the feeling of distressing doubt. Perhaps on this account it is not always easy reading, as a critic in the *New York Times* observes. "But it is reading well worth while, preëminently to the Irishman: almost equally to the lover of good literature, and to the thoughtful observer of our national trend and tendencies."

XVI

LITERARY METHODS

TO form a just estimate of Canon Sheehan's literary activity it is necessary to know something regarding his method of working. He had cultivated the habit of writing from the days when he was a curate at Mallow. As time went on he came to regard it as a mere recreation. Occasionally, it is true, he had worked over his compositions under a sort of compulsion, on moral grounds. That was after his name had been heralded as the author of *My New Curate*. His readers wanted more, and he felt obliged to satisfy a craving that had been productive of such excellent results. This sense of obligation arose not so much from the fact that he had become popular as a writer as that he had been successful in creating a taste for a certain form of fiction at once new and entertaining, spiritual and national. He felt elated at the thought that through the clergy, who were leaders in their respective sphere, he was preaching a gospel for the benefit of Ireland and the Church. The idea of doing good to the younger generation of priests who were now reading his books stimulated him to continue in the same direction.

During the last few years of his life he spent as a rule two hours each day at his desk, or at a little table in his garden. That was after he had made his daily pastoral rounds. He rarely visited socially, and he was not often called away from home, for it was well understood that he avoided public engagements when they did not come to him directly from his superiors.

The plots of his stories he wove together without effort; they developed spontaneously. He had, as Father Phelan has expressed it, "a mind that absorbed facts, stories and impressions like a blotting-pad." He never labored at

composition. If a situation which he had created did not readily come to an issue, he dropped it for a time, took up another novel, or a different book on which he was simultaneously engaged, and waited the inspiration that would solve the difficulty.

The explanation of the ease and grace with which he was able to coördinate his thoughts and impressions lay, no doubt, in the fact that his life was molded by a purpose that was as definite as it was ever conscious. He was a searcher who collected facts, made observations, and utilized every incident and experience as material for the completing of a plan or scheme that possessed his mind. The scientific arrangement of the structure to be raised by him was constantly before him. He had drawn it out in well-calculated detail during the earlier years of his life. And now he was spending the rest of his days in putting the material to good use. Everything he saw — the trees of the forest, the stones of the quarries, plants, minerals, animals, in short the wonders of earth and sea, the sunlight and stars above, men, the child, the adult, served his purpose; all these would fit into his scheme of construction, ornament, coloring, refining, and illuminating. Hence he wrote with wonderful rapidity, yet with the most poiseful deliberation. Chapter after chapter of his manuscript shows hardly any erasure or change.

Whilst he had great facility in expression, he seemed to care little for technique. Hence he rarely changed a word unless some afterthought made him feel that the sentiment expressed might wound the susceptibilities of his readers; or unless someone suggested the possibility of misunderstanding. I doubt whether he ever revised or reread what he had written *currente calamo*. His was an exceptionally clear handwriting, and his letters down to his death maintain the same round and beautiful caligraphy. All of this was natural to him; and I believe his exquisite handwriting is an indication of how little trouble his thought-arrangement or the refining of his imagery cost him. In one of his letters to Father Russell he speaks of handwriting in

letters, and holds that a correspondent is bound to take as much pains to write legibly as he is to speak audibly and in good form when addressing a lady or gentlemen.

While he was writing in turn *Miriam Lucas*, *The Intellectuals*, and *The Queen's Fillet*, he gathered into a volume also the earlier *Essays and Lectures* that had been scattered in various magazines, already referred to. These were published in 1906. He likewise assembled and completed, at odd intervals, the notes and observations which later on were published under the title *Parerga*, and which supplement or parallel the earlier series of *Under the Cedars and the Stars*. Both of these volumes embody in brief paragraphs snatches of philosophy, science, ethics, theology, history, art, poetry, travel, and reverie; and they give us some idea of the wide range of the author's reading and observation. The material is so combined and proportioned as to become a sort of panacea for mental lethargy after serious labor, a tonic both pleasant to the taste and invigorating to the constitution that can assimilate it.

Shortly after *Parerga* had appeared in England he writes to Father Russell:

DONERAILE CO. CORK,
April 27, 1908.

DEAR FR. RUSSELL,

I feel that I must thank you for the excellent notice of *Parerga* in the May *Monthly;* and also for the copy of *Book Notes* which you so kindly sent me. I think it is almost the first time that Mr. B. has said a kind thing about my books.

I had some scruples in writing at all about Shelley; lest I shd. be supposed to ignore his grave faults of character. But I have always regarded him as the "Mad Shelley" of Eton and Oxford; and then, he had some fine qualities of mind and heart. I think it is almost certain that, if he had lived, he would have come around to the Church. The real beauty of Christianity, distorted and obscured by early education, was beginning to break on him.

I have no scruple about anything I have said of Shakspeare. I hardly ever like him. I sometimes loathe him.

Ever sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

What other friendly critics thought of it is well expressed in the following letter from William O'Brien, M.P.:

May 12th, 1908.

I have spent four or five charming evenings by the fireside, enjoying the rich, if often sad, philosophy of your new work. There is so much in it, including the experiences, which reflects in a more erudite way my own view of life. Where any ground for sadness should come in in a life like yours, which has all the charms of the cloister, of the library and of a scholar's little rural world, in whose happiness you count for so much, would be utterly puzzling to me, and I dare say the fact that life (and especially public life) suggests so many tragic reflections to myself, who have a private grief to sadden me, is an equal puzzle to you. It is a common fate in a world "where but to think is to be full of sorrow and leaden-hued despair." Happily the brain which can be such an instrument of torture can soften its own casualties (especially within the spiritual region in which your thoughts must so continually lie). Under the very best and happiest condition, material life is wholly incapable of satisfying us.

XVII

ECHOES FROM FOREIGN LANDS

WHILST *Geoffrey Austin*, on account of the educational principles which it advocated, had found at once an applauding circle of readers among certain isolated classes abroad, it was not until *My New Curate* had appeared that the Catholic reading public in general awoke to the excellence of the Irish priest's literary powers.

The "Feuilleton" of the Cologne *Volkszeitung* was the first to bring out a serial translation of the novel. In Austria the *Gral* printed extracts, and the *Gral-Bund*, a society of leading Catholic writers, arranged with the author to have translations printed of extracts, such as the story of "Alice," etc., for popular distribution.

Later on, when the distinctively national character of Canon Sheehan's books began to attract the attention of literary students, his works were made the subject of lectures in the University courses, and a lady student at Munster asked the Canon's leave to make the peculiarities of Irish humor as illustrated by his works the subject of a dissertation for obtaining her doctorate in Letters. In the German seminaries the clerical novels were being read at conferences, and at the dinner table of religious communities.

Almost simultaneously the French papers and magazines began to extol Canon Sheehan's writings. An authorized translation of *My New Curate*, and subsequently of several other stories, was published under the auspices of the Abbé Georges Ardant, editor of *La Semaine Religieuse* (*La Croix*) of Limoges, by the Paris firm of Charles Amat (subsequently transferred to the firm of P. Lethielleux). The actual translator of these, including, besides *Mon Nouveau Vicaire*, (1900), *Chez les Anglo-Saxons*, *Geoffrey Austin* (1904), *Le Suc-*

cès dans l'Echec (1906), and *Ange égaré d'un Paradis perdu*, was the American Sulpician, Father Joseph Bruneau, of Baltimore. A prominent critic and writer on social science, member of the National Chamber for Alsace and Lorraine, Dr. Joseph Brom, wrote in unqualified praise of the French version of *My New Curate*. Under the title of "Le Journal Humoristique d'un Vieux Curé" he reviewed it as being in no way inferior to the best work of Yves de Querdec (Georges Fonsegrive), the famous editor of *La Quinzaine*, to whom in fact the translation was dedicated. Another writer sums up the general verdict of the French press by saying of the author of *Mon Nouveau Vicaire*, "C'est évidemment un styliste de première force, un écrivain merveilleux, un fin psychologue, un artiste," to which eulogium a clerical commentator adds: "Une âme sacerdotale et apostolique."

Indeed it is this latter mark of priest and apostle that has appealed to a large number of the Canon's readers as much as his literary genius. Among the many touching expressions of gratitude that came to the Canon through his writings were those of the Comtesse Costa de Beauregard. She mentions an experience with her children's nurse, an English girl "with a drop of Irish blood in her." The young woman was in the habit of complaining that "church gave her a headache" and "French sermons made her feel faint," etc. "I gave her your book, with the feeling, I confess, that it was above her head. The next day I found she had spent the night over the volume — she asked to go to confession — and has been quite another woman ever since. She worships Father Sheehan." At another time she writes of *Geoffrey Austin* and *The Triumph of Failure:* "They are *Sursum corda* and have been a feast to me. . . . Some of your thoughts have struck me like lightning . . . that about Rénan. . . . Unhappily I am no scholar and much in your book is over my head. I never could understand what the 'Kampaner Thal' was, though I have read lots of German." Regarding *Luke Delmege* the same lady writes:

CHATEAU DE BEAUREGARD-DOUVAINE,
HTE. SAVOIE, FRANCE.

REVEREND FATHER,

. . . I have been reading, re-reading, and meditating the book (*Luke Delmege*) ever since a year or so ago. . . . I really feel I am "feeding on the marrow of the giants." It is so good to be conscious of a strong hand helping us along the weary path, that I must thank you again and again for all the good grain you are sowing. Just now I am trying to see if "Luke" could not be translated into French. We want that sort of book very much, and never get it; and it is a pity. I have two sons who will soon be old enough to understand your beautiful teaching; and they shall learn to love Canon Sheehan, and to read all that he has written. If that does not keep them out of harm's way, nothing can, I am afraid. Allow me to ask your blessing for them, and also for my little girls who love to read English, and will also later be your truest readers.

Believe me, Reverend Father, most reverently,

CTESSE COSTA DE BEAUREGARD.

Whilst these and similar expressions of appreciation reached the Canon from some of the best minds in France, and among whom may be mentioned Firmin Roz, author of *Sous la Couronne d'Angleterre*, who had visited Ireland and as the friend of Lord Castletown had met the pastor of Doneraile, his books did not on the whole find that popularity in France which they seemed to deserve. He assigns a reason for this in one of his letters to his friend Mr. Justice Holmes. "My books," he writes, "have never caught on in France, because I have written somewhat enthusiastically about Germany; but in the Fatherland and especially Austria-Hungary, these books are great favorites."

In Italy the story of *My New Curate* was taken up by Avvocato Angelo Mauri of the *Osservatore* at Milan, who insisted upon the great good that the propaganda of the Irish Canon's books would do for students and cultivated classes in Italy. He points out in letters and editorials how splendidly Catholic principles are emphasized in the

life of Sheehan's heroes. He repeats what Baron Clemens von Droste Huelshoff had said on behalf of the German Catholics — namely, that Canon Sheehan's books revealed a magnificent type of people, too little known except by their faults. These faults he says, are, as a rule, only the outgrowth of some virtue which it were well if some other nations possessed as abundantly. Thus the defects which Canon Sheehan allows in his characters, such as clannishness, suspicion, or resentment against "informers," have their source for the most part in an instinct of loyalty, in deep sympathy and sincerity of friendship, which is unknown to the Anglo-Saxon character, with its sense of superiority.

There are many indications in Father Sheehan's correspondence that his books became the incentives to a higher spiritual life and in some instances to conversion to the Catholic faith. Occasionally some writers were trying to his nerves. Not infrequently persons asked for information on topics that had been suggested by reading his books, or they taxed his sense of responsibility for accuracy. Young writers asked for directions of how to become as famous as the Canon had become. Older ones requested him to send them statistics, names of books, and all kinds of information. They asked a thousand questions of every sort, sometimes implying criticism.[1]

To the clerical reader the Canon's writings were not merely an entertaining illustration of pastoral life but in many cases an incentive to ecclesiastical perfection. A prominent Irish churchman had said that if all the priests of the diocese read *My New Curate* and meditated on its lessons, "we could omit the annual retreat." "When I was curate at the Vicar General's in Toronto," writes the author of *Irish Mist and Sunshine*, "we used to take turns

[1] A Protestant gentleman who had greatly enjoyed *My New Curate* wrote to ask for the sources of some of his quotations, ex. gr. whether the phrase quoted by Father Sheehan on page 220, "Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari," as St. Bonaventure's, was borrowed by Thomas à Kempis from that saint. (The passage seems to belong to St. Bernard, Serm. in Nativ. Dom. III, n. 3.) He scrupulously answered all such questions where he thought the writer really desired information.

(including the V. G.) at reading aloud a chapter each day after dinner."

Among the foreign University students who read the Canon's books, were some who expressed in ancient classical language their appreciation of his works and the desire to see them translated into their own tongue. A Latin comment on a popular novel is a sufficiently curious phenomenon in modern literature to excuse our giving one of several such encomiums found among the Canon's reliques.

TREVERI, GERMANIA, *die Octobris*, 30, 1909.

DILECTE IN XRO PATER,

Perpulchras tuas fabulas, quibus inscripseras "My New Curate" et "Luke Delmege," quibusque etiam in mea patria nominis gloriam famamque es adeptus, cum legissem, haud parva affectus curiositate novissimam "The Blindness of Dr. Gray," quam in libello periodico "Ecclesiastical Review" in publicum nunc temporis edis, legere coepi. Quod novum narrationis genus animo meo uti speraveram, magnam parat laetitiam, praesertim eo quod duo supra dicta opera solum translata in linguam Germanicam legeram. Quae igitur fabula cum tam bene composita sit, persuasum habeo illam etiam non secus ac ceterae a te conscriptae in mea patria multos inventuram esse amatores. Quare mihi in mentem venit at te permissionem petere vertendi eandem. Quod optatum mihi et libri excellentia necnon meae vitae conditio inspiravit . . .

Suppliciter ergo peto a te ne has meas despicias preces, quibus concessis non modo opus Deo pium praestabis et quibus nihil mihi gratius facere poteris, sed etiam populo Catholico Germaniae quem nunc temporis acerbissima pugna litterari decertare et tu non ignoras, arte litterari objective aucta gaudium spirituale praestabis.

Benigne mihi respondeas, utens, quaeso, lingua Anglica, neve pro Christi in nos amore deneges preces meas.

Hocce sperans salutat devotissime,

G. B.

Similar expressions of approval came to him from other countries, mainly from clergymen, some of whom made their pilgrimages in person to Doneraile in order to converse with the author. It is needless to say that the Canon was

equally familiar with French, German, and Italian literature, though he made no pretense of fluently speaking or writing these languages.

What chiefly drew men of every nationality, even those who did not share the religious convictions of the parish priest of Doneraile, to admire his writings, was the broad spirit of toleration in matters of opinion and tastes, that pervaded them, together with all kinds of information that drew upon the resources of every profession. One of his medical friends, while criticizing the diagnosis in the case of the sick girl in *My New Curate*, nevertheless appreciated this characteristic, and wrote to him: "I suppose it matters really little except that, as you seem to be conversant with everything, from the depths of theology and philosophy to the manner in which a courtship is carried on in a priest's kitchen, you may wish to be also considered an adept in leech craft." It was this catholicity, as much as any literary excellence in Canon Sheehan's stories, that gained for them popularity in foreign countries, despite the fact that the translators necessarily fell short in depicting his exquisite humor, so peculiarly original and exclusively Celtic.

PART III

PASTORAL LIFE

I

THE PARISH OF DONERAILE

THE story told of Peter Paul Rubens, while on a diplomatic mission to Philip IV at Madrid, applies to Canon Sheehan's career as a writer. "I see," said the courtier, who visited the Flemish painter in the interests of the Spanish king, "that *Señor Embajador* amuses himself by indulging the art of painting." "No," replied Rubens, "it is *Señor Pintor* who amuses himself by playing *embajador*." The reputation of the parish priest of Doneraile in the world of letters, and among his brother priests generally, arose from the fact that he had written some attractive novels and scholarly essays. But the thing for which he was far more remarkable, and to which he attached much greater value, was the art of being an excellent parish priest. His writings were the merest adjunct, an accident, however fruitful, of his priestly calling; much as is the art of good elocution in a missionary. He believed that the pen is a powerful weapon for propagating truth; and it is only in this light that he regarded his calling as a writer. Literature was to him, the priest, like voice culture. It had no value unless it served to bring men to know and love God better by ministering to the offices of charity and instruction. It is probable that he would never have written his stories if he had not found the incentive to do so in his priestly or missionary work.

All his training hitherto had led up to the exercise of the pastoral office. Whilst he had had abundant opportunities for observation, and for sharpening his mental faculties, the occasions for applying in a practical way the results of his observations were limited so long as he was a curate under the instructions of his pastor.

At Doneraile he could do as he thought best; he could try his schemes without either seriously endangering the good of the souls confided to his care, or running counter to what his superiors might deem the wiser and more efficient methods of administration.

To understand Father Sheehan's activity under these circumstances we must take a brief survey of the parish in which it was his vocation to labor. It is worth while, too, to get a closer glimpse of Doneraile, its traditions and surroundings, not only because these explain many things in the life of the man whom we are studying, but also because the little town is in all likelihood destined to become the center of attraction for admirers of the writer of *My New Curate*. During the last ten years of his residence there numerous visitors found their way to the little parsonage, despite his care to safeguard his seclusion, and the fact that it was remote from the railway and not easy of access. In sooth, the little town is likely to grow in celebrity when Ireland has found its normal status, and can remember the man, the priest and writer, who honored the Irish name abroad, besides lavishing his generous services on his countrymen at home.

THE STORY OF DONERAILE

Doneraile Parish consists of the town of Doneraile and the district surrounding it. There is a record of the *Ecclesia de Dunrayl*, the *Ecclesia de Russath*, Vmr., and the *Capella de Closdufog* comprised in its ancient boundaries, which bears the date A.D. 1291. Before that date the name was *Bybloxe towne* (in the Book of Lismore it is *Dunairaill*, signifying "Fort of the Cliff"). The Church Registers at the end of the reign of James II contain the reports of the government inspectors, giving lists of the parish priests of Doneraile after 1688. Side by side with these dates we have the official reports of the "Church of Ireland," beginning in 1591. These latter are interesting documents for the church historian, inasmuch as they blandly inform him that "Prior Bothon" of the Reformation in Ireland, "est rector

et usurpat (*sic*) utramque vicariam Ecclesiae de Cloisdoick et Ecclesiae de Donnerall." Twenty-five years later (A.D. 1615) we have the significant testimony that a soldier had usurped the vicariate: "Donerayle, Rossedock, Rossagh — rectoriae impropriatae. Joh'es Jepson, miles, tenet rectorias et usurpat vicarias. Val. 12 Li. per Ann. — Ecclesia et cancella ruinantur." Then follow the names of four other worthies who governed the parish (Protestant population, 250) until 1693, when "Under the Establishment Doneraile was held with Templeroan."

Among the Catholic priests whose ministry appears to have been recognized by the civil authorities about this time, we find:

"Rev. Tighe Daly, 1688–1707, registered, aged 68, Parish priest of Doneraile, Cahirdoogane, and Templeruan. He received Popish orders 1669 at Roane (Rouen) in France, from Archbishop of Roane [Rouen]. Residence — Carker. Sureties, Arthur O'Keeffe, Ballymohill, £50; Godfrey Daly, Carker, £50."

"Rev. Owen O'Keeffe, 1707–1726, Poet Priest [Vd. Poetry and Legendary Ballads, South of Ireland, Cork: Guy and Co.] like his namesake, John O'Keeffe, the dramatist, possessed the most varied and versatile powers. He was born at Glenville, Co. Cork, in the year 1656. He married early and had a son, whom he reared for the priesthood but who died in 1709, at Rochelle, France, in the flower of his youth, whilst engaged in the prosecution of his theological studies. Owen, the father, entered Holy Orders after the decease of his wife in 1707, and closed his life on the fifth day of April, 1726, as P.P. of Doneraile. His remains are interred in the graveyard of Old Court, about a half a mile west of Doneraile. The epitaph is from the chisel of Denis O'Daly. The Most Rev. John O'Brien, Bishop of Cloyne, whilst a young priest on the mission in the Diocese, wrote another epitaph which is also engraven on the tombstone. The following would be a metrical translation of it: —

> "*A gravestone lies above thee, laid this night,*
> *Thou mildest priest, in God's great laws well versed —*
> *O'Keeffe, of heroes mightiest in the fight,*
> *Whose lore illumed the Gaelic learning 'erst.*"

The original inscription translated from the Irish by D. McCabe, reads:

"Here lies interred Owen O'Keeffe, who spent a part of his life married, and after the death of his wife was filled with a divine vocation, being a wise, prudent, chaste, affable man, a profound and skilled poet and genealogist.

"A zealous and indefatigable priest, well versed in the knowledge of the original language of his forefathers and country, through which this uncommon inscription has been placed over him.

"He died on the 5th of April, 1726, and it is sorrowful to the youth of Munster, and moreover to its clergy, he having left many truly learned and well written books in his own autograph, which are to be seen in Ireland this day.

"*Alas, cold flag, beside you lie of life bereft*
A gentle priest, in God's great laws well versed;
A poet, genealogist, historian far famed,
Of the brave Sept O'Keeffe, who in conflict gained renown."[1]

The beautiful Celtic cross, seen at present over the grave of Father O'Keeffe, in which the ancient tombstone is skillfully inserted, was erected by Canon Sheehan.

The condition of the Catholic parish at this time, so far as its temporalities were concerned, may be gleaned from the following record in *An abstract of the state of Popery in the diocese of Cloyne 6 Nov. 1731:* "Doneraile Parish has a kind of shedd instead of a Mass-house. One Popish priest serves this and Templeroan parish. There is no convent of Fryars or Nuns. No Popish school."

Among other remarkable predecessors of Canon Sheehan as parish priests in Doneraile may be mentioned: Rev. John Cotter, P.P. from 1739–1784. The inscription on his tomb in the Old Court graveyard reads:

"This monument was erected by the Rev. James Cotter, P.P., of Doneraile to the memory of his uncle Rev. John Cotter.

"During forty-five years he governed the parish with that integrity and zeal which dignify the priesthood. Disinterested and

[1] These details regarding his predecessors were collected by Canon Sheehan himself at the instance of Colonel James Grove White, and written by him, with other researches in the same field, for the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archeological Society*.

humane, he felt for the distress of mankind, and merited the universal love and applause of his parishioners. — Adoring the disposition of an all wise Providence, he met death with firmness, and cheerfully resigned his spirit to the hand of his Maker 16th of May 1788, aged 84 years.

"*Te populus coluit, luget te luce carentem*
Inque uno patrem pastorem plangit amicum.

(*Translation*)
Thy people worshipped thee;
Now, since thy eyes are closed, they weep
That they have lost in thee
Their father, friend and priest of God."

From 1799 to 1815 the Very Rev. Lewis Walsh, P.P., Vicar General of Cloyne, resided at Doneraile. He built a chapel at Shanballymore, and is on record as the priest who protested against the Veto. He too is buried in the Old Court graveyard, and his tomb bears the following characteristic inscription:

HERE ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS OF THE VERY REV. LEWIS WALSH
DOCTOR OF DIVINITY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NANTZ
VICAR GENERAL TO THE RT. REV DR. COPPINGER
AND R. CATHOLIC RECTOR OF THE PARISH OF DONERAILE.
HE ADMINISTERED THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF THE PARISH FOR 15 YEARS WITH THE
ENLIGHTENED ZEAL AND EXEMPLARY PIETY OF A TRULY CHRISTIAN PASTOR.
HE DIED ON THE 16TH DAY OF JANUARY IN THE YEAR OF O. L. 1815
SINCERELY AND UNIVERSALLY REGRETTED.
MAY GOD GRANT ETERNAL REST TO HIS SOUL. AMEN.

The next pastor was the Very Rev. Dr. O'Brien, also Vicar General, who governed the parish for almost twenty years, and during that time built the church (1827) in Doneraile. He also built the Presentation Convent at Doneraile (1828). He is mentioned as having been called to testify as witness in the great conspiracy alleged against the people of Doneraile, which was tried in the court of Cork in 1829.[1] He was buried in the church which he had built. Beside him lies his successor, the Very Rev. P. Sheehan, D.D., who was Vicar General of the Cloyne diocese.

[1] This trial forms the subject of Canon Sheehan's novel *Glenanaar*.

An item of interest to American readers is the fact that among the curates of Doneraile parish was Dr. Michael O'Connor, afterward Bishop of Pittsburgh. His special charge was the chaplaincy of the convent of the Presentation nuns. When, in 1838, Dr. Peter Richard Kenrick, afterward Bishop of St. Louis, visited Doneraile, he induced Dr. O'Connor, on behalf of his brother Francis Patrick Kenrick, Bishop of Philadelphia, to come to America, where he became rector of the diocesan seminary of St. Charles Borromeo. Among other curates mentioned between 1834 and 1849 is a "Father Meagher, who died in America." From 1866–1870 the parish priest of Doneraile was Dr. Thomas W. Croke, subsequently promoted to the bishopric of Auckland, to become, in 1875, Archbishop of Cashel.

In 1785 the parish of Doneraile, dedicated to the Nativity of the B. V. Mary, included the churches of Kilcolman, Kilmacoom, and Killady (built by St. Mochomoc), Rossagh, Kilconnors (mentioned in a Bull of Pope Nicholas), Templeroan, and Kilmacneese. A later record tells that "the parish is united to those of Cahirduggan and Templeroan."

It appears from documents in the possession of Lady Castletown that the district of "Downeraile" was purchased, with much other land, in 1636 by Sir William St. Leger, whose ancestors had crossed to England in 1066 with William the Conqueror. The owners at that time were Sir Walter Welmond and John Spenser, son of the poet. In 1645 Doneraile Castle was captured by the Irish, and in the following century is reported as being in ruins. The beautiful mansion of "Doneraile Court" was built in 1725, and a part of it was subsequently burnt. On account of the very extensive and well kept park attached to the house the estate came to be called (1814) "Doneraile Park." The river Awbeg runs near the Presbytery, and is crossed by a neat stone bridge of three arches, whence the name of "Bridge House," which Canon Sheehan occasionally puts at the head of his letters.

Although the town is small it was not without civic and literary distinction in the past. In the seventeenth century

Doneraile was a parliamentary borough. Here Sir William St. Leger, Lord President of Munster, had his castle, and as lord of the manor, or through his seneschal, was privileged to hold court-leet and court-baron. By a second charter under Charles II (1660) the borough was empowered to return two members to the Irish Parliament, and the elective franchise was vested in the freeholders made by the lord of the manor. From this period until the Union it continued to send two burgesses to parliament. Then it was disfranchised with a compensation of £15,000 paid to the heirs of the Viscount of Doneraile.

The township also has the reputation of having been a famous sporting center, and is supposed to have enriched the English language with the term "Steeplechase." The local history records a running match of the year 1752 — the first of its kind — when "Mr. O'Callaghan and Edmund Blake raced from the church of Buttevant to the spire (or steeple) of the church (St. Leger), a distance of four miles and a half over a stiff country."

The country round about Doneraile is extremely attractive, the forest abounding in admirable specimens of shade trees, oak, elm, larch, Spanish chestnuts, and fine fir of broad girth. The hillsides are studded with handsome country residences. The river falls in cascades, and in its clear waters are found choice trout of the rainbow and Loch Leven breed. Deer and other game roam freely through the well-kept preserves of the Park.

The region is full of legendary traditions in which "the White Lady" and various impersonations of the past Viscounts of Doneraile are made to figure.[1]

[1] A peculiar kind of poetic fame attaches to Doneraile through the well-known ode of execration, called the *Curse of Doneraile*, by Patrick O'Kelly, who, having come from Dublin to that town, there lost his watch and seal. Whereupon he wrote a damning denunciation of the place and people, in verse. His own powers as a poet he has immortalized in an autobiography which ends:

"'Twould take a Byron and a Scott, I tell ye,
Combined in one to make a Pat O'Kelly."

It is said that the Lady Doneraile, to save the reputation of the town, made him a present of a watch and seal, in consequence of which he composed a *Palinode* to offset the "Curse" of Doneraile.

Like other places in Ireland where saintly missionaries had come to baptize the newly converted, the town has its Holy Well, the *Tober Coneela*. Tradition traces the name to Coneela a Colliagh, one of the three virgin saints invoked as patrons of Doneraile, Drinagh-wood, and Wallstown. Olehane, chief of the district, is said to have founded a church near one of the wells, and the latter was believed to cure sore eyes and scurvy. A second church on the site of the present building in Doneraile, or a little behind it, was dedicated to St. Coneela.

Doneraile, taking in the outlying farms, counts 1833 inhabitants according to the latest government census. But the parish limits extend over an area of about seventy square miles and include a mission chapel at Shanballymore, together with a number of "Stations" where the priests periodically say Mass, and at the same time administer the sacraments and give religious instruction. Canon Sheehan has described these places in an interesting memoir in which, while giving an account of his parish work, he touches upon the legendary and historic associations of the various localities. He writes:

Well, we've finished the rounds of Stations. We have trodden on historic, or semi-historic ground. We have passed by the two Danish moats under the old frontier keep of Shinagh, near Waterdyke; have skirted Ballinamone, the ancient seat of the Nagles, one of whom, Elizabeth Nagle, married Spenser, the poet (see Lowell on the English poets). In this house, too, lived George Bond Lowe, who was fired at eighty years ago, whence originated the famous "Doneraile Conspiracy Trial," in the evolutions of which O'Connell won his brightest laurels. Who has not heard of his journey by coach from Cahirciveen, his relays by the way, his appearance in Cork courthouse to the utter dismay of the Solicitor-General, his breakfast on the dry loaf of bread, interrupted between every bite by his exclamation: "That's not law, sir!" the saving of the poor victims from the gallows by his marvellous eloquence; their transportation — ah, yes! it all comes back, for here are their grandchildren in my parish to-day. And down there across the Awbeg, whose silver is now gleaming in the morning sunlight, is the spot where Father O'Neill was horsewhipped by

Captain St. Leger; and when the old priest shrank from prosecution, Curran forced him into it, took up the cause of the old man without fee or reward, except that it laid the first stone of an immortal reputation. Here, too, is Carker (*carcer*, a prison), where my predecessor, Father Tighe Daly, lived in 1688, one of the priests who had to be duly registered and his good conduct guaranteed by two solvent securities. Here is the copy of his registration, culled from the Rolls Office, Dublin Castle.

Canon Sheehan carefully copies the registration, culled from the Rolls Office, Dublin, in which Father Daly is written down as "the pretended parish priest of Cahirduggan, Doneraile and Templeroan."

Next he speaks of Tooreen, a favorite spot of his, back in the defiles of the black mountains:

> You can see it gleaming — a little green patch against the sombre setting of the purple hills; and it stretches deep down into the brown valleys, where the streams, turbid with flood-wrack, wine-colored from the peat, or crystal in the mild summer time, forever break the silence and monotony of these wilds. And here dwell a simple, hardy race leading a kind of monastic life in their solitudes, and rarely venturing beyond the seclusion of their valleys, except to Mass on Sundays or holidays. I had heard of them long before I ever thought I should be their pastor. From far before the famine years, when the population was ten times what it is to-day, their reputation has come down unbroken, as being the very first, winter and summer alike, to enter the church on Sunday morning. They are seven miles away — no roads from the inner fastnesses of the mountains, — yet here they are at half-past seven on Sunday morning, eager for the Mass that is to cast its halo of blessing over their labors for the coming week. I tell them they ought to be holy — they are so near to God.

He loves to go out into the open country with the men, to hear their talk and catch the impressions which things make on their minds and hearts. Here was the melting-pot out of which came the real figures of Irish life for his novels.

> "From this spot, yer reverence," says old Dan Magrath, the woodranger, "you can see the five counties."

So you can. The sea to the south, the Shannon to the west; and in the east, Knockmeldown, beneath whose conical summits nestles the Mecca of the Irish — the Monastery of Melleray. And far in front stretches a vast landscape, broken by ridges that run parallel to one another, but transverse, here from the mountains to the sea. It is dotted all over with white farm houses, from which the blue smoke, this calm March morning, curls upward to the sky. The smell of Spring is in the air, blended with the pungent aroma of peat and wood-fires, carried to us across the wide lowlands; the cattle are browsing lazily in the far meadows; now and again you can hear the bark of a watch dog far away, or the song of some colleen or bouchal, as they pass down to the creamery; and all Heaven over your head is resonant with the raptures of the larks who fling down the dews from their exultant wings and the peals of music from their throats that gasp with exuberant melody. And this is Ireland? Yes! And there, down there in the lowlands, and here in the mountain defiles, are the Celts? Yes, every one! But was it not here, even in this very valley of Toreen, that Spenser saw the ghosts coming out of their caverns; and was it not of this very country he wrote, that its population was exterminated? Hear his words, written just there below, where the black ruin of Kilcolman Castle makes a blot upon the landscape:

"Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they looked anatomies of death; they spoke like ghosts crying out of the graves; they did eat of the carrions, happy when they could find them, yea, and one another soon after, insomuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves; and, if they found a plot of water cresses or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast for the time; yet not able long to continue wherewithal; that in short space there were none left, and a most populous and plentiful country was suddenly left void of man or beast."

Yet a few years, and through these very files swept down the stalwart Rapparees, who surrounded Kilcolman Castle, and put the brand to this keep of the robber and the stranger; and then with characteristic chivalry dashed through the burning rooms to rescue a babe, whom, too late, they had heard was left behind by the Saxon servants. And here after three hundred years confiscation and burning, exile and death, Connaught plantations

and West Indian expatriation, here still are the Celts apparently as indomitable as ever. Surely, if Rome is the "Eternal City," the Irish are the "undying race."

Let us go down from the hill-top in our course of Stations, and visit the lowlands. We pass at once under the shadow of another mighty frontier fortress, also belonging to Spenser, for he held three thousand acres of land here, confiscated from the Earl of Desmond. It is a splendid old keep, still well preserved — a square, embattled tower, like that which suggested to Dante the simile of masculine fortitude — *Sta come torre ferma.* You can see it for miles around. Sometimes, when the sun shines, it is almost invisible, for the white face of it does not show against the sunlit mountains. But, generally, it stands out clear, distinct, well defined, a solid square of mediaeval masonry against the everlasting hills. It is Castlepooke — the keep of the Phooca or Witch; for you must know that once on a time, a famous witch, and a malignant one, took up her quarters here, and wrought dire distress amongst the people around. She burned the corn in the fields, until the wheat ears were filled with soot instead of grain, sterilized the milk in dairies until no amount of churning could produce cream, brought dread disease on the cattle, etc., and alas! there was no benevolent fairy to counteract the evil doings, or bring blessing for curse to the afflicted people. But there was a hope — a promise — a tradition, that if the habit of a Grey Friar could be flung over her in her sleep she would rise up and vanish in a flash of fire. And, one day, the emancipation came. A poor mendicant called at a farmer's house in the neighborhood, and begged for alms and a night's lodging. It was freely given in this land of hospitality. The stranger slept, and lo! curiosity led the vanithee to open and inspect the bundle the poor man brought. It was all he had, but the staff for his hand. And she drew out the lone grey habit of a friar. It was rash, perhaps sacrilegious; but the time had come. God had sent His messenger. But who would dare face the tigress in her den? Not one would volunteer! At last, a little child was requisitioned. She knew no fear, probably because she knew no sin. Carelessly she ascended the high mound of the Castle, carelessly entered, carelessly threw the garment over the sleeping woman, who instantly rose in the air, angry and threatening, and passed away forevermore in a flash of fire towards the West. So goes the legend; and of course it is true; but I do not vouch for it.

Another "Station" on which he dwells is Kilmacneese in the plain, where there was an old church and graveyard of Saint McNeese, a disciple of St. Patrick. This Station comprises Inchnagree (the island of the cattle pens) under the mountains of Mole. Thence you pass across Bawntigeen (the green field of the little house) on to Kilcolman, Ardeen, and Ballyvonaire. Here also was a church, built in honor of St. Colman. But let Father Sheehan speak:

> Here, in a little field, is the church of Rossdoyle or Rossdale, mentioned in the same page as Doneraile, in the assessment made by Pope Nicholas in 1291, for the Crusades in the Holy Land. But St. Colman's Church and priory are gone: yet here dating from 1387 is the Castle of Kilcolman, famous for ever as the place where the 'Faerie Queen' was written. It is now a solid stump of masonry, but must have extended far and wide across the meadow and above the bog, there beneath, once an ornamental lake. How the imagination travels back across centuries to the old Desmond Lords who built it; to the Elizabethan usurper, who never preached but one solution of the eternal Irish question, and that the Cromwellian one of wholesale massacre! And how the centuries glide into each other; for here a few years ago, the most popular representative the great Republic of the West ever sent to Ireland, J. J. Piatt, wrote sonnets on the blackened ruin and on the more modern structure beneath.

Here he copies into his notebook a poem which he had unearthed and which tells of the chivalry of an Irish warrior who leaped three times into the flames to save the despot's child.

He had not much sympathy for Spenser the poet, as a man, remembering how that autocrat was ready to exterminate the Irish people; and he records the gruesome fact of how Spenser died a beggar in London in a lane near the great Cathedral of Westminster. But Canon Sheehan's Irish patriotism finds some compensation in knowing that at present Kilcolman Castle is held by the Celto-Catholic Barrys, and that "right under the old keep is the white-washed cottage of the secretary of the Land League — an unmistakable Celt of Celts — William O'Toole."

Across the Awbeg he comes to Caherna,

where for three hundred years the greatest horse fair in the world is held on the 11th and 12th July; by Cahirduggan, whose village (depopulated by plague) church and castle are swept away; by Cornahinch (hill of the island), Ardanaffron, which is either hill of the Mass, or Saffron Hill, its modern appellation, for here grew acres of yellow crocuses, which yielded the saffron, with which the Irish invariably dyed their outer garment; by Ballyan-Dree, the town of the Druids, and Crogh-na-cree, where there still may be seen the sulphur and lithia well that wrought marvellous cures in pre-Patrician times.

The traditions that clung to Doneraile parish were not without significance for the new pastor's future work. They furnished him with interesting material for study, and they helped to fashion his impressions regarding the character of the people among whom he lived. The pride that attaches to the ancient glory of the race remains in the heart of the children. They feel a proprietorship in the natural beauty of the country around them, over which no land-law has control. There is the romance of heroic deeds embedded in the soil. Every shrub and tree exhales a subtle aroma that speaks to the humble peasant as it speaks to a poet, of love of country, and of future hopes of the freedom that once was a birthright in every clan. The sign of the cross is everywhere in nature. The faith of the native of Erin is entwined with the valor of the past and the glory of the days to come, not only in the symbolic shamrock, but in rock and stream, in bog and sea, in the song of the thrush on his roof tree, and in the curling smoke that rises through the chimney of the peasant's cabin. These visions are ever alive to the imagination of the Celt and create for him a folklore wholly present and intimate.

Such tokens, full of lyric mystery, attracted the aesthetic spirit of Canon Sheehan. He loved to inquire and search into the magic of these things and to find in them the answers to countless riddles and questionings of the soul. Their echoes are to be found in his writings, in his preaching, and indeed in his whole life as the pastor of the people.

The poetry of nature and the traditions of Ireland had for him no other purpose than that of furnishing the instruments through which he might interpret truth to his countrymen and especially to his humble parishioners. He loved to speak of nature to the children, whose souls were to him the souls of poets and princes by right divine.

Whilst his perceptions turned to the practical needs of the soul, the instincts of his heart made him sympathize with the bodily miseries and wants of those around him. Thence sprang that eminently priestly eagerness to relieve his people of the burden, not merely of sin, but of all the ills that result from it, — the slavery of earthly dependence, the thriftless poverty that dishonors, and all the evils that are not of God's making, but lead to the degrading of man's native nobility.

With these principles in view he ordered his pastoral life from the first day he entered upon his duties as their spiritual leader.

II

SHEPHERD OF HIS FLOCK

CANON SHEEHAN'S life in Doneraile was centered in the education of the children of his parish, in the betterment of his people, and in his literary work. His was a busy and an active life. From early morning till late at night his duties as pastor absorbed his chief attention. He was methodical and simple in all that he did. Punctually each day he said Mass in the parish church. It was his custom to make half an hour's thanksgiving unless some urgent call of charity interfered, after which he breakfasted. After that he usually attended to his morning mail, answering letters. About half-past ten he went out to visit the schools. There were two schools in his immediate neighborhood, — that of the Christian Brothers for the boys, and the girls' school at the Presentation convent. Besides these he had under his care five schools in the outlying districts. These he carefully supervised, though it was possible to visit them only at periodical intervals. Yet it was commonly understood that every child in each of the schools was known to him by name as well as by sight. He had the secret of making the children fond of him, so that they all looked upon "Father Pat's" coming as a treat. He knew how to interest and encourage them individually. His singular powers of observation made him at once understand the disposition of the children to whom he spoke, and he was able to recognize through them the conditions of the home whence they came. Quite often he thus ascertained the particular needs of the parents, so that he was enabled to benefit both simultaneously. On entering the school he noted at a glance the absence of any child from its accustomed place. If new pupils happened to be in school he would engage them in pleasant talk, showing that he was thoroughly interested in the

little students. From his "Station" visits he knew as a rule the localities whence the children came, their play haunts and associations; and through this knowledge he was able to attach them to him, as he made them feel that they were never entirely out of their pastor's sight. It was a pleasure to see the little gossoons gather around him to hear him tell stories. This he often did in school, and he had re-

From a photograph.

"FATHER PAT" AMONG THE CHILDREN

markable skill in adapting himself to their little ways and imaginations.

"He was particularly beloved by the very small children in the convent school, probably because the good Presentation nuns knew how to call forth manifestations of childish affection from their scholars. They best understood the beautiful spirit of their pastor whose gentle manner toward the little ones drew them to him. To the nuns he was the priest who carried not only blessing and peace with him, but also helpful suggestions, and that silent encouragement which means so much to the teacher in school." [1]

One of the religious of the Presentation Convent tells how the Canon managed to amuse the children in the infant class. "He would challenge them to sing, and in

[1] From *Notes* by Brother P. A. Mulhall, who, as Director of the Boys' School, was associated with Canon Sheehan for a number of years.

order to get them to do it, would himself start one of their favorite baby tunes. As a rule the mites soon caught the spirit of their fatherly preceptor, and would try to improve on his rendering of the melody. An American priest who visited the schools, was, to his surprise, asked to sing for the children. When he hesitated, the Canon himself struck up some favorite air, to the evident delight of the class. Then the visitor had to take his turn, as did the children themselves. Sometimes the Canon would draw a sketch on the blackboard, and turning to the class would ask who could do better than that; whereupon the little tots would come up jauntily and try their skill. On one of his last visits to the infant school he asked the children if they could draw his picture on the board. They hesitated. Taking the chalk, he outlined a pretended sketch of himself. 'Now,' he said, 'some of you surely can do better than that for I cannot see myself as you can see me.' Then they gathered round him to study his face and figure, whilst he stood before them as though he were posing for a portrait painter; and it gave him infinite pleasure to see the earnestness with which they tried, one after another, to do his likeness in 'black and white.' Nowhere, outside the community room of the convent, where he was always received with reverent affection, was there any place where he felt so thoroughly at home as in the midst of the little children." It was a common refrain with him: "If the babies have a special place in heaven I should like the privilege of being with them for eternity." Sometimes, on leaving the class-room he would turn to the Sister in charge, and half sadly say: "How I wish we could always keep them in their innocence; the thought of what may become of them saddens me."

If he kept his eyes and heart on the children, he did not lose sight of the adults. He invariably celebrated the half-past eight Mass on Sundays, and remained in or about the church until shortly before ten, when he took his breakfast. At half-past eleven he was back in the church; and he stayed there until a quarter to two. After

the twelve o'clock Mass by one of the curates, he addressed the children. In this way he not only relieved his assistants from the task of having to give the instruction whilst still fasting, but secured continuous and systematic preparation for the Sacraments. Many of the grown people attended these instructions, for Canon Sheehan's eloquence, while very simple and direct, was wondrously attractive. He had a way of illustrating the eternal truths so as to rivet the attention of all, especially of the children. Equally engaging were his sermons to the congregation. They were always short, and they held the attention of the hearer not only by the lucidity of his language but by the way he had of investing each daily action with a spiritual purpose. He could throw a glow of enthusiasm over the ordinary duties, so that the employments of the household, of the field and the shop, took on a sacredness that lifted daily life above the commonplace.

His presence at the late Mass gave him an opportunity to meet the people as they came out of the church, and greet and chat with them individually. They got quite into the habit of coming up to him to shake his hand or kiss it, or to ask his blessing, or a word of advice or help. "The affection and reverence his people had for him," writes Brother Mulhall, "were clearly illustrated on these occasions. He had a greeting, a kind word, a smile for each, without making any exception or distinction. This was keenly appreciated by everyone."

After two o'clock on Sundays he placed himself at the disposal of the men — the farmers and other peasants and cottiers, — to hear their troubles and grievances, and to direct them in their agrarian and other difficulties. He had a keen grasp of the land question, and by his prudence and wise counsel was the means of averting numberless quarrels such as were apt to arise from threats of eviction or rivalries among the tenants in the days before 1903. He fearlessly and successfully espoused their cause in the long struggle for ownership of the land.

Sunday after Sunday the men of the district used to meet

in the Christian Brothers' school, with the Canon as chairman, to discuss their vexed problems. These meetings were conducted in the most orderly and practical manner. Farmer and tenant would each express his opinion and when all had spoken the Canon restated and sifted the difficulties. In conclusion he suggested what he deemed the wisest course of action for the best interests of all. The projects and matters to be presented to the landlords were carefully prepared and weighed; and it was remarkable with what confidence the men came in time to rely on their pastor's superior wisdom and grasp of their problems. They felt the strength of his judgment, his prudent foresight, which anticipated every obstacle, and his manifest desire to benefit them individually as well as in community.

Thus he became the great motive power behind the farmers, advising, encouraging, and effectually assisting them by every safe and practical counsel. The visitor to Doneraile to this day will hear but one voice of cordial gratitude for the untiring efforts of the late Canon, to whom the people of the parish owe untold blessings of domestic comfort, generous opportunities of primary and secondary education, and exceptional prosperity.

At these Sunday meetings the farmers at first discussed only the agrarian troubles that prevented them from improving and holding their farms on rent. After the passing of the Wyndham Act, when it had become evident that these disagreements would disappear under Canon Sheehan's wise guidance, the conferences turned on the improvement of the land by the adoption of new methods for raising profitable crops, increasing the farm stock and dairy products. Hitherto the tenants, while doing their best, had barely succeeded in keeping their families on the harvests wrung from the impoverished soil. It was not worth while to improve the land, for that would only call for a rise in rents. Hence the people on the farms had ceased to care for appearances; the old fences were left unrepaired; things looked wretched on the whole, because that was the only way to keep the argus-eyed agents from fresh extortion.

But now there was opened up a new outlook; and it seemed as though the slough of despondency, in which the country had lain for long years, would disappear. Experts in land cultivation were invited from an agricultural college to give the people a knowledge of the soil, and to instruct them in the economical ways of planting and culture. The school children, returning to their homes, took the papers which their pastor gave them and read them to the old people, who were proud of the knowledge which came from such sources. Order, cleanliness, thrift, intelligence, worked hand in hand, and made the young folks feel their importance as cultivators and prospective owners of the soil. There was a lessening of the craze to go to America; and altogether things took on a brightness that rejoiced both pastor and people.

The influence which Canon Sheehan wielded among the people was not confined to Catholics, nor to the farmers thus benefited. The local authorities recognized that the parish priest of Doneraile was a dominant factor for good in the district. At public meetings, whether convened for the purpose of promoting charity or for some other local interest, or merely for entertainment, the Canon was almost invariably called upon to preside. He was known to be not only a most eloquent and forceful speaker, but the master of a clear mind, full of resources, and gifted with a kind heart which took account of whatever concerned the welfare of the various classes in the community. Those who differed from him in politics or in religion soon came to realize that, whilst he was an ardent lover of his country, a fervent priest, who would stand for no compromise that demeaned his profession of faith or dimmed his patriotism, he was nevertheless free from the bias that makes the mere partisan. They recognized in him a man of refined sentiment, one who had nothing but tolerance and courtesy for those honestly differing from him. Above all, they knew that he was a person of all-sided education and good instincts, a writer whose contributions to literature had shed luster upon his country, whom every intelligent and honor-

able man might proudly claim as a fellow citizen. For this reason he was sought after by all classes of societies and local organizations for the promotion of industry, reform, or the pursuit of science, letters, and arts. So it came about that among his friends were the neighboring notables of no matter what religion or political party.

Canon Sheehan was understood to be the most public-spirited citizen in the borough. He made it plain to his people that a proper community sense demanded of them to do their shopping and repairing with the tradesmen and contractors of their own town. He himself followed this policy, declaring that little or nothing was to be gained by going abroad; and that to do so meant a positive loss to local development. This caused the business men to be invariably fair in their dealings, thus creating public confidence and a just local pride.

In like manner his influence made the policing of the district practically unnecessary. Delinquents were followed up by him in the gentlest but most persistent manner. It was quite well known, however, that where the chief excuse for any wrong was poverty, the Canon was sure to obtain freedom from penalty for the culprit. "Many a fine turn my good Canon did for me unbeknownst to ye all," said an old woman after his death. "The other mornin' I tould him I had nothin' for the childer's breakfast. He called me into his sittin' room and says he: 'Is it true what they say of you, that you take a little drop now and then?' 'Begor it is, Canon,' says I, 'when I get a pint of porter for nothin'.' With that he give me two and six-pence, saying: 'That won't be much harm, my good woman, if you keep to that.' And I goes out and gets the children's bread and milk and a drop for mesel' to drink the poor Canon's health." His care of the poor was touching. It was quite a common habit with him to walk into the house or cabin at meal time; sometimes he would taste the porridge or the potatoes and milk given to the children. "The potatoes are poor," he would say, and then slip a shilling or two into the child's hand, so as not to offend the sensi-

tiveness of the old folk, who might not be willing to expose their wants.

An instance of his public-spiritedness and care for the general welfare was his conduct on the occasion of a fire, during the winter of 1900, which threatened to destroy the village. Close to the bridge by the side of the river which skirts the presbytery and schools stood an imposing building erected in 1794 as a flour mill. It was subsequently converted into a lumber mill which gave employment to a goodly portion of the village folk. Late one night when the people had retired, the old sawmill caught fire. No one gave the alarm, and in a short time the main edifice, a six-story building, was ablaze.

> Something mysterious woke me up from sleep just as the clock was chiming midnight. It was some time before I could gather my thoughts together. Then I noticed a curious light, palpitating against the blind of my northern window. I thought it was the moon; but instantly I remembered that the moon never appears in the northern horizon. I rose and raised the blind. Across the river, and not two hundred yards away, the mill, built as a flour mill, years before American competition drove Irish flour even from Irish markets, was on fire. Every coign and crevice was caught in the flames, which leaped through seventy windows and reared themselves thirty feet above the roof. I could feel the heat in my bedroom, but could not hear a sound. The wind blew from the east, and carried the roar of the conflagration far out to the west. Not a soul was stirring although the single street was lighted as if by a hundred electric arcs.

Brother Mulhall tells us how the Canon roused the villagers. It was no easy task. They slept the sleep of innocence and exhaustion. When they began to realize their danger, the people grew alarmed, and justly so, for half the village is thatched, and nothing could have saved it if the wind had blown from the north or west.

Having examined the condition of the stables, the house and church, and given the necessary directions for the safety of the property, it suddenly dawned on the Canon that the nuns in their cloistered dormitories might not have heard

any alarm, and so might be entirely unaware of the danger to which they were exposed, for the convent lay right in the track of the burning debris that was flung high in the air from the seething cauldron beneath. "We could see great flakes of fire falling on the convent roofs and lodging in the trees around. It seemed only a matter of minutes before the whole building would be wrapped in fire and smoke." After much knocking at the convent lodge the nuns were aroused and found refuge in the garden behind the building. Meanwhile the men of the village lent strong and willing hands to help, and although "they had to dodge the burning flakes of slate and timber, they prevented danger to roof and trees." Not until all risk was past did the Canon return to his house. From twelve to four he had stayed out in the chill air to see that no harm befell any of his people.

His forethought and kindly assistance never failed. Though busy not only during the hours he had set apart for study and writing, but at times with important educational and political affairs upon which his counsel was requested, he never lost sight for an instant of his pastoral obligations. A call to the sick, a demand at the gate from some poor woman, or even from a tramp, would cause him to set aside the most important business of a purely secular nature. Charity and the patience and forbearance that go with it was his besetting weakness.

He was the first to establish the St. Vincent de Paul Society in his district, and in general systematized the care for the needy, especially during an epidemic or when the crops had failed after a hard winter. We have already seen that he made over to the Bishop, by will, all the income of his books (such as then brought a royalty to him) for the benefit of indigent and disabled priests; and subsequently he gave over also the proceeds of his later publications for the poor at the Bishop's discretion. Of the small sum which remained to him at his death he bequeathed 100 pounds for Masses for the repose of his soul. The rest he divided between the St. Vincent de Paul Societies of Doneraile

and Mallow. Twenty pounds were to be distributed by his successor to the poor of Shanballymore (in the outlying district of his parish). He left some further sums for private charity, and directed that his library be sold for the benefit of the poor of Doneraile. His Bishop, who was one of the trustees, was not satisfied that the Canon should deprive himself during his lifetime of the disposition of his entire income, and insisted that he should reserve for his needs some portion of the funds he had created. He later on discovered that the hundred pounds which the Canon had accepted was used to increase a fund established to provide cocoa as a warm morning drink for the poor children in one of his schools. In all his benefactions the name of the donor was suppressed, and numberless cases of his provident and kindly care, of which no one had suspected him to be the author, were revealed only after his death. The trust funds which he had at first meant for the sick clergy were, with his consent, subsequently devoted to other more pressing needs.

Seasons of general rejoicing, like Christmas, gave him opportunities for the exercise of special charity. "Many Doneraile households," writes Brother Mulhall, "owed their hearty Christmas dinners, cheerful fires, and warm clothes to their silent pastor. Frequently he arranged with grocers and drapers to have them supply the poorer families with whatever they needed. Invariably it was done in a way that saved the recipients from the stigma of being applicants for alms. They were either engaged to do some small service which elicited a generous return; or they were made to believe that their credit was good, and that when the times improved they would be expected to repay the provisioners." Only after his death did many become aware of the mysterious creator of numerous local benefits.

Indeed he himself considered that he was the people's real debtor. Being their shepherd, he was fond of reminding himself that he earned untold joys from their docility, their reverence and affection; that they furnished him the

material for much of what he wrote, bringing him financial gain, which he believed really belonged to them.

He never repelled a beggar. In sooth there was a marked considerateness in his treatment of the poor, which had taught his housekeeper never to dismiss or belittle mendicants, no matter what might be their external appearance. He himself gives a characteristic instance in some of his notes of how he regarded the genus "tramp."

About six o'clock the evening before the storm a tramp came into my garden when I was reading. My servant said: A gentleman wanted to see me? So I said: Send him up. We are so polite in Ireland that every one is a gentleman or a lady, when they are not noblemen. I saw at a glance at his boots that he was a tramp. Now I like tramps, just as I like everything planetary and wandering. It is because I am such a precisionist that I could not sit down to dinner if a picture was hung awry, or a book misplaced on a shelf, that I love irregularities in others. A piece of torn paper on my carpet will give me a fit of epilepsy; but I can tranquilly contemplate the chaos of another's study, and even congratulate him on his splendid nerves. So tramps, comets, variable stars, wandering lights of philosophy, stars of the outer darkness, flotsam and jetsam of heaven and earth — I have a curious sympathy with them all, as fate or fortune blows them about in eccentric orbits.

This wayfarer told me that he was from my native town (which was a lie), that he was a tradesman out of employment (which was another); that he was hungry and thirsty (which was half and half). I gave him sixpence which he shortly after he left me transmuted into whiskey. Then he lay down under an open archway, and slept all through a terrific storm. I have no doubt but that the electric fluid shot through that open arch again and again, during the night; but the Eudaemon who presides over drunken people warded off the bolts. He woke the next morning, stiff but sound and whole; and was utterly amazed at the universal consternation around him. And there are people in this world still who say that drink is an unmitigated evil.

The Canon used to tell of a beggar, one of the incorrigibles on his staff, who, though not of the parish, was in the habit of calling at more or less frequent intervals at the

rectory, and never in vain. It was many years since Tim had joined the ranks of the unemployed, too fond of his "drop of the crathure." On one of his visits, as the recluse of Doneraile would tell the tale, when the "materials" were a mixing "for the sup that would give me a little stringth in me legs against the hill on the way home," the beneficiary made a grimace as he noted the stinting of the principal ingredient in the decoction. Without revealing his disappointment by any sign he accepted the glass very politely, took a modest draught, and in a matter-of-fact tone asked whether the whisky had not been inadvertently forgotten. No, the ingredients were all there, he was assured. Taking a second and a third sip, Tim paused, eyed the glass quizzically, and as he poised it for the final up-ending, remarked sententiously: "Well I wouldn't misdoubt yer Riverence. Maybe I'll meet it at the ind."

Although he appeared to humor begging tramps, the Canon did not merely satisfy his sympathies by giving them "sixpence." He often made friends of them, got their real story and confidence, and was in many cases able to help them to better things. It was not his way to reproach or preach to them out of church.

S. R. Lysaght, the Irish poet, who knew Canon Sheehan intimately during the later years of his life whilst he himself lived at Doneraile, writes of him: "One of the most remarkable characteristics of Canon Sheehan was his genius for sympathy. This was so comprehensive that it gave him influence and won him affection among all sorts and conditions of people."

The charity that seemed to control all his doings was apparent also in his ordinary conversation. He had a keen insight into the weaknesses of human nature. This made him alive to the foibles and faults of character and disposition in others. But it also taught him the art of self-examination and self-correction, and made him ingenious in finding kindly interpretations of the motives that actuated others, and of the circumstances which might have proved a peculiar temptation to them. He never permitted him-

self to gossip, or to elicit idle comment on the doings of his fellows, whether priests or laymen, and he appeared to have cultivated a special talent for converting into favorable comment the harsh judgments of those who were disposed to be critical.

Wholly in keeping with this intelligent spirit of charity was his tolerance of the opinions of others. Without ever countenancing error or sin, he felt only compassion for those in whom he found these irregularities. His habitual forbearance gained many who would have been opposed to him on account of his religious profession or his political convictions. His gentleness caused those who were prejudiced to listen to him, and thus to abandon their hostile attitude. His habitual gentleness, seemingly incompatible with the strong impulses of his native temperament, was undoubtedly the result of much reflection and self-training. His very humility, enlightened and unaffected as it was, induced others to yield their judgment to his, and to allow him to direct their actions. One felt absolutely safe under his guidance, knowing that he regarded the interests of others as a sacred trust that was to take precedence of any advantage for himself. The nuns used to say that his presence was like the spring sun; you felt its lightsome and warm atmosphere, knowing that it was making things grow even when you did not see it. He had learned the trick of laboring cheerfully for others without waiting for acknowledgment or return.

Whilst the dominant note of all his actions was that of meekness, there was no lack of either decision or deliberation in them. He was not in the least sentimental. He never gave a judgment in cases of complaint involving accusation of any person, without having heard both sides and examined all the details of the charge. It did not make any difference whether those who lodged the charge were Catholics or Protestants, whether they held one political opinion or another. He simply tested the merits of the case, and when his verdict came it was unhesitating. People did not question his wisdom, and if there was any wounded feeling

the Canon, by a happy way of emphasizing the humorous aspect of a situation, knew how to soothe it.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

One of Canon Sheehan's earliest critics had charged him as a writer with being unpractical, a theorist who, however plausible and brilliant in his presentation of the ills that afflict his country, utterly fails in suggesting any definite remedy, or even showing a willingness to do aught for their removal.

> He has looked with a more intuitive glance, and has seen deeper into the elusive nature of the Celt, and of that variety of the race that flourishes in his native land, than almost any other man of his time. He has caught, as it were in snapshots, phases of its life that had never yet been secured by any other artist . . . and yet he has been for the most part a psychologist who has noted the phenomena, but has done little to indicate their value . . . It would not, we admit, be consonant with the principles of his art, that he should undertake the work of a benevolent society or of the Department of Agriculture, but at least we might expect him to direct to those complicated problems of life, so lightly skimmed over in his book, some share of that attention which he represents as distracted by futilities and wasted in fruitless speculation. He might have helped to make his countrymen conscious of the forces which their carelessness has left to slumber in such unproductive lethargy. He might have shown them, under the concentrated light of his own intelligence, the results of their waywardness and caprice. He might have pointed to some exit from the maze, in which their energies seem fettered. He has preferred to remain a passive moralist.[1]

Apart from the fact that Father Sheehan's criticisms of educational and economic neglects carry with them, for the most part, suggestions for their remedy, or at least of the sources where such remedies are to be found, it is entirely untrue that he speaks as one who prefers to remain the passive moralist. Even as curate he sought to remedy, as far as his opportunities and experiences warranted, what

[1] *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, Vol. XI, 1902, p. 156.

he believed needed correction or attention. In his novels he not only makes his characters represent ideals and theories, but he records their efforts to realize them, and often their failures as well. His stories are not a series of *doctrinaire* essays, but a symposium in which the views of the enthusiastic and untried curate are examined without bias, and commented upon by way of correction, mostly by older and experienced men.

But whatever may be the judgment formed of Canon Sheehan's writings, we clearly learn from his career as parish priest of Doneraile what he accomplished for the amelioration of home conditions. His daily life was but a verification of the principles which are represented in the characters he portrays as models of priestly and pastoral zeal. Fathers Aidan, Costello, Bellamy, Dr. Gray, Daddy Dan, as well as Letheby and Luke Delmege, in one form or another, reflect the work of the good shepherd under difficulties that will always beset its realization. We see their virtues and their foibles, their impossible ideals and their actual achievements, their failures and disappointments in the midst of their pastoral labors. The greater part of these images of "real life" was the reflection of his own correcting and chastening experience. All through his ministry he may be said to have striven to carry out, to the full extent of his ability, and beyond the measure of the opportunities given to most pastors, the aims which he has sketched for us in his writings. As a true guardian of his flock he felt that he should not confine his efforts to the administering of the sacraments, to preaching and teaching, to visiting the sick and relieving the poor, to decorating his church, and enhancing the divine worship for the edification of his parishioners. He did all this. But he did much more. He looked after, and defended, the temporal interests of his people, the public good of the community in which he lived, and labored conscientiously as a spiritual guide and pastor of souls.

III

THE LAND PURCHASE ACT

IN 1903 the Wyndham Act had opened for Ireland the first definite prospect of a conciliation between tenant and landlord. It offered to the latter a fair price in actual money for his lands, to be advanced by the Government, and it allowed the tenant, under the title thus secured, to purchase farm and house by simply continuing the payment of rent to the appointed State agent for a definite time. For generations the tenants had been without any encouragement to improve their holdings. Hence the people, seeing no prospect of bettering their lot or that of their children, allowed the young folk to go abroad to America or to Australia. If they had not the means for the long journey, they went to nearby cities — Dublin, Liverpool, London — where they might earn their bread without fear of eviction whenever the harvest happened to go against them and they were unable to pay the rent. Often enough they left the old homestead at the risk of losing the faith that had sustained their fathers under trials, and of breaking the bonds of affection that had tied them to the motherland.

But now there was offered an opportunity to them to become owners of the soil which hitherto they had tilled for others. They would still have to pay the rent as heretofore. But it would be applied as purchase money, so that the next generation, after the lapse of about twenty years, would obtain from the Government a clear title of ownership. The proposal opened up splendid prospects for those who were willing to work on the farms. If they improved the land, the benefit was their own; and thus a sense of responsibility, a spirit of thrift, and an incentive to industry, for their own homestead, would be gradually developed.

Moreover, the feeling of ownership would raise the self-respect of the people, always proud, and yet often forced into servility by land agents who in the name of Sovereign Domain had power to starve them and their wives and children. With the sense of self-respect and of local freedom, with the habit of thrift and industry, and a hearth of their own, developed among the laboring classes, it was possible to build up a prosperous Ireland.

There were several obstacles in the way of the Land Purchase Act. One was the attitude of the landlords. Many of them were not disposed to sell on the conditions proposed; others were willing to do so only after certain arrears of rents had been settled in full. In some cases difficulties were raised by the tenants, who, feeling that public opinion as well as the Government were coming to their aid, began to assert their ancient grudges against the proprietors of the land and were disposed to reject any equitable compromise. Both parties in many cases harbored feelings of distrust, if not of hatred, begotten of national as well as religious antipathy.

The chief difficulty was to bring these men together, to make them see that it was to their mutual advantage to reach a peaceable settlement, and to subdue the pride of position and race that separated them.

As a first step to success in the attempt to create an understanding, Father Sheehan gathered, as we have seen, his people round him on Sunday afternoons. He explained to them the situation and all that was involved in their accepting the proposed government scheme. That plan he had carefully studied. He had consulted the men who could advise him in the matter — lawyers, and disinterested landowners who had a correct estimate of the value of the farms in the district. He had likewise sounded the disposition of his men; the temper of those who were likely to have a leading voice, or to exercise control over the others. He knew the capacity in labor, stock, money, of each farmer who had a purchase right.

With what consummate prudence and patience he acted

throughout is evident from the account of the proceedings. Of these we happen to have full details by one of the principal tenants. He tells of how the Canon first sought out the natural leaders among the farmers; the men who were influential, and those who were headstrong or likely to divert from its purpose any argument that did not appeal to their personal interest or flatter their vanity. Avoiding every appearance of dictation, the Canon merely consulted them; got them to state their views and formulate their wishes and expectations. Next he drew from the spokesmen among them concessions of what would be best for all. Thus he caused them to unite with seeming spontaneity on some project or proposition formulated by him in their name. Indeed he never failed to insist on their acting in this matter with their own full conviction, and as it were independently of him. Finally he showed them, now that they had agreed upon a plan beneficial to all, how necessary it was that they should adhere to it; that they should not let their temper interfere with the success of the proposed course, and that unity of purpose and coördination of methods were essential while they were working hand in hand to attain their end. He pictured to them in glowing words what success in this case meant to them, to their children, and to the community. He roused their national and local pride by pointing out to them that they were pioneers in the good work; that others throughout Ireland would follow their example; how they were destined to bring comfort and prosperity to the land of their fathers, and what it all meant for the hastening of Home Rule.

In spite of all the Canon's precautions, some of the members of the conferences gave trouble. One of the first meetings arranged, after a considerable amount of correspondence between Canon Sheehan, as representative of the tenants, and the principal landowners, took place at the presbytery. The attorneys had previously stipulated that nothing could be done until the farmers who were in arrears of rent had agreed to pay their dues in full. Eventually sundry reductions and compromises which had been proposed by the

Canon were agreed to in writing. One of the landlords of the district, being absent on account of indisposition, appointed his son to act as his representative in a final settlement. When the day of the meeting had come, and the men had assembled at Bridge House, the Canon briefly stated the purpose of the meeting. He outlined the conditions thus far agreed upon, and the willingness of the farmers to abide by them, provided they received guarantees, then and there, that they should obtain a transfer of title to the land then held by them on rental. "But," said the Canon in his clear, incisive way, "these men are not satisfied with promises. They want definite assurance and a signed title, to guarantee their ownership." It was understood that failure to fulfil the contract meant forfeiture of the title. He then asked the agent to signify his compliance on behalf of the landlord. "Sir," said the latter, "neither I, nor my father, will be dictated to by the priests here. We shall arrange with the men who are our tenants, directly." The Canon stood up, bowed, and left the room.

One of the farmers arose and said in a somewhat excited manner: "We will act either through the Canon, our representative, or not all, Sir." Thereupon the landlord's son went away without making any settlement. One of the men present, who was back in his rent for several years, and who had agreed to pay every farthing of it, before claiming the right of purchase, made a solemn pledge that never, as long as he lived, would he pay a penny of rent, and that he would resist eviction with every means in his power. He hoped that God would forgive him and that the law would protect him and his children from the poor house.

The discussion seemed to all appearances at an end. But the Canon pursued the subject. Eventually he brought his people to see that they must yield for the moment; must keep their temper in check. The man who had registered his oath would not go back, whereas the landlord insisted on the payment of arrears. Somehow the Canon arranged to satisfy the claims of the latter while leaving

the delinquent farmer under the impression that the arrears had been remitted. Thus things were finally settled.

The contest lasted four years, from 1903 to 1907. The records present an interesting study of human frailty and human shrewdness; but they also point to the beginning of a new era for the town of Doneraile and the people of the parish. The peace that grew out of the struggle created everywhere in the district happy homes, and brought forth increased industry and new prospects of prosperity.

"We can now work at their education"; said Canon Sheehan, when relating these things to the writer some years after. "Hitherto our preaching was to make our people patient under their insufferable hardships, because they might hope in God's mercy. Now we can exhort them to gratitude, and they feel the joy of being Christians."

Having secured freeholds for the tenants of his parish, Canon Sheehan exercised his influence in improving its communal interests. His authority was being more and more recognized by the leading men and officials of the district, and, being consulted in all matters of public interest, he became instrumental in introducing an electric lighting plant, installed at the mill, for the people of the town and for Doneraile Court. The power-house also contains the machinery for pumping water from a spring near the river to a reservoir on the rocky upland above the town. Thus all the houses receive a plentiful supply of fresh water, and it is no longer necessary for the householders to resort to the stream or the public pump. This arrangement has had a good effect not only on the sanitary conditions of the place, but on bringing about a sense of cleanliness and tidiness, not to speak of the comfort to the aged and sick, and a marked change for the better in the manner of domestic and public living. The village has a postal and telegraph service and a branch office of the National Bank.

As a result of these modern improvements the material conditions of the people were greatly advanced. Their houses became models of home comfort. The sidewalks of the streets were flagged or laid in concrete, the gardens

and farms properly fenced, avenues planted with trees, and so the value of most of the properties was increased.

In speaking of the general betterment in the communal life of Doneraile and the countryside around, we have to state that Canon Sheehan found continuous and strong support in the proprietors of Doneraile Castle, Lord and Lady Castletown. They had marked the action of the priest from the beginning, and though not of his faith, they were naturally interested in his management of their tenants. Lady Castletown's family, the Viscounts of Doneraile,[1] had lived on the estate for several centuries. Her husband, Baron Fitzpatrick, descended from the Irish Clan M'Gillaphaddring, former kings of Ossory, is a man of large affairs who has traveled far and wide in America and Europe, besides having seen service in two African campaigns as an officer in the British Army. He was soon attracted to this Catholic priest, whose conciliatory temper, wise management of his parish, and love of his people were enhanced by a degree of culture, eloquence, and an ability as a writer unusual even among the clergy.

Though a Liberal Unionist in politics, Lord Castletown understood that the Canon's stand for mutual concession as the only practical solution of the Home Rule and agrarian questions was for the benefit of both landlord and tenant. He had spent many of his years in Ireland, and had met with the vicissitudes that taught him the wisdom of yielding to circumstances. Moreover he was a scholar, interested in educational progress, an Eton and Oxford man, who on his very first visit to the parish priest's house found there the congenial atmosphere of the student's home. Here was a clergyman of the people with whom he could discuss not merely religion and politics, but the literature of the day, the value of local antiquarian discoveries which archeologists like Usher were setting forth in the scientific journals. Thus in time these two men contracted an intimacy of which Lord Castletown speaks with much feeling. He has

[1] Lady Castletown is the Hon. Ursula Emily Clare St. Leger, daughter of the fourth Viscount of Doneraile.

given us an appreciation of the Canon which, considering its unprejudiced source, is all the more acceptable.

It was characteristic of Canon Sheehan's pastoral discretion, that, despite his close relations to the Castletowns, he rarely visited their house. His daily rounds were almost invariably confined to the church and schools. The rest of his time was given exclusively to the poor or sick. But Lord Castletown, as lord of the manor, comprising some twenty thousand acres, had frequent occasion in the interests of his estate to call upon the priest. These visits were fruitful of many benefits to the people of the little town and the district. If some of the landlords made difficulties which delayed the Canon's benevolent designs to have his people avail themselves of the Wyndham Purchase Act, Lord Castletown was not one of them. Indeed he greatly aided in the accomplishment of the transfer.

Both men took a personal interest in the work of the Gaelic League started by their mutual friend, Dr. Douglas Hyde. They went together to address and assist the local "Feis," as the meetings were called, and Lord Castletown comments in glowing terms on the lucid and eloquent speeches made by the Canon on these occasions. He speaks of the esteem in which the priest was held "by all the surrounding gentry, both Protestant and Catholic," and tells how he frequently heard people of all classes say, "Oh, we shall take the matter to the Canon; he will settle it to the best advantage of all concerned."

Lord Castletown writes: "Strangers, good judges of the best type of mind, who have staid with us and met him, told me how much they were impressed with his extraordinary lucidity in conversation. Any subject incidentally discussed between them was apt to call forth his gift of illustration, indicating a vast store of accurate knowledge in the varied fields of letters, the sciences, and arts. I was never so struck by this attribute of his remarkable mind than toward the close of his life. I saw him within three weeks of his death, and found him most clear and accurate in the expression of his thought. He was quite aware of his

impending death at the time of his grave illness, but he continued to work to the end. In the intimate talks I had with him he showed me how well prepared he was for the great change he was calmly facing. His was certainly one of the most beautiful natures I have ever been privileged to meet."

The nobleman dwells on the Canon's modesty, his retirement and shyness of public approval, and his natural delicacy in all that concerned his intercourse with his own people or friends. He speaks further of the Canon's exquisite taste and the keen interest he evinced in matters of Irish folklore and music. Of course the neighboring gentry appreciated his books, not merely for the fidelity with which they sketched local peculiarities, but also for the elevated thought and erudition of which they gave evidence. If Canon Sheehan did not readily make his appearance in the houses of the great, he nevertheless carefully observed the urbanities looked for in one of his position, and which were sure to aid him in the more effective accomplishment of his ministry. His books gave him the opportunity of showing his appreciation of such assistance. Thus he writes to Lady Castletown on occasion of the appearance of *Parerga:*

DEAR LADY CASTLETOWN,

May I ask your acceptance of this the latest volume I have put into the literary market? It is a series of disquisitions on things in general, ranging from little incidents in our village up to Shakspeare and beyond. I have marked two passages — one a reference to the House of Lords and Lord Rosebery — the other referring to Mr. Usher whom I have canonized — which will give you a key to the whole book. In the hope that it may help your Ladyship to pass a pleasant hour,

I remain very sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

The friends whom the Canon made in this way remained true to him during all the years of his life at Doneraile, and must have been a source of blessing to his people as well as consolation to the priest himself. "As for myself,"

writes Lord Castletown, "I have never ceased to grieve (since his death) for the departure to his home of one who was my kindest counselor and intimate friend. He was, as one of the poor people said, 'a saint on earth,' and I am sure he is now 'a saint in heaven.'"

IV

THE CANON'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE

WHILST Canon Sheehan's accurate and graphic pictures of domestic and pastoral life were generally regarded as aiming at lifting popular effort to a higher level of religious, civic and national virtue, it was not expected that this poet and painter of exquisite genre pictures and still life, this country priest with his dread of popular demonstration and of newspaper publicity, should take an active part in the political agitation of his countrymen. At most it might be assumed that he would express his opinion, when occasion offered, concerning the political measures taken by the Government or the attempts of popular agitators to sway the mind of the public. Few men, outside his intimates, knew that he was actually a political leader — unseen and unnamed, yet withal powerful and ever watchfully active. It may be safely asserted that as a silent organizer of constructive forces — literary, educational, and industrial — he exercised an influence that cannot easily be measured by conventional standards.

Those who knew have said of him, since his death, that he did more to mold public opinion, through personal influence over certain Irish members of Parliament, than was effected by plans of campaign and conferences in the councils of the chiefs. After the Parnell collapse he clearly saw the difficulties that must arise from the variable temper of factions whose attitude was rendered irreconcilable, because they apparently forgot the purpose of their contest in discussing the means by which to reach it. Canon Sheehan, in his isolated altitude, was free from the bias begotten of local affection and personal interests. He realized the danger which confronted men, no matter how zealous in their love of their country, however wise and

courageous they were, who were lacking in that harmony which in a crisis called for the sacrifice of unimportant points of preferences. To these men he showed the disastrous effects, and the resultant waste of energy, of insistence upon comparatively slight differences; and he was listened to because he spoke as one careless of personal appreciation. For the most part, his influence was exercised by correspondence, by writing for the public journals, and through friends, like William O'Brien, M.P., and other men whose ardent patriotism, he knew, kept them outside the official party that stood for emancipation. The Member of Parliament for Cork has left us a memorandum of Canon Sheehan's part in the national struggle of his countrymen:

> The Canon's work was that of a patriot, not of a politician. He was one of the few far-seeing Irishmen who realized all the possibilities of the Policy of Conciliation, inaugurated in 1902 under the Chief Secretaryship of Mr. George Wyndham. The first notable achievement of that policy was the Land Conference, composed of the joint representatives of landlords and tenants whose report was the basis of the great Land-purchase Act of 1903. By this measure the ownership of three fourths of the soil of Ireland was transferred peacefully from the landlords to the cultivators by means of temporary annual payments. The transaction was effected by advances from the Imperial Treasury. The evicted tenants were under the same agreement restored to their holdings.
>
> Those who had solved the agrarian difficulty proposed to proceed to the crowning settlement of the Home Rule problem by a similar method of Conferences, Conciliation and Consent.

How wholeheartedly Canon Sheehan sympathized with this policy of national appeasement is abundantly testified by a paper of his in the English *Fortnightly Review* of December, 1910, in which he comments upon Mr. O'Brien's book *An Olive Branch in Ireland, and its History*. After dwelling on the true character and strength of Parnell, his final mistake, and his efforts to regain his old ascendancy, but for the loss of which he might have saved the nation from the present delay in attaining the advantages of absolute Home Rule, he writes:

We have always thought that the democracy of Ireland has never realized its power or responsibility. It is too easily inflamed. The national *fierté* has a tendency to break away from the cool dictates of enlightened patriotism, and attach itself with a kind of fury to some individual whose person or whose character appeals to the imagination by its picturesqueness. That cool calculating determination that sees clearly what it aims at, and makes every person and every circumstance subserve that aim; that moves slowly but invincibly towards its object, gaining vantage ground everywhere, and never allowing itself to swerve aside through enthusiasm for an individual; that places principles before persons, and great ideals before passing emotions, is wanting to our national character . . .

He mentions the famous letter from Galway dated September 2, 1902, which gave the keynote of a policy that has since then grown and expanded into almost universal acceptance, and which promises to be the one political principle on which the Irish question shall ultimately be settled. What he calls the "historical sentence" in that letter, reads:

In the best interests, therefore, of Ireland and my countrymen I beg most earnestly to invite the Duke of Abercorn, Mr. John Redmond, M. P., Lord Barrymore, Colonel Saunderson, M. P., the Lord Mayor of Dublin, The O'Connor Don, Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., and Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., to a conference to be held in Dublin within one month from this date.

He continues:

This was the inaugural note of the "conferential policy" which so soon after eventuated in a measure of supreme importance to Ireland, and which must be the basis on which all future legislation for Ireland shall be framed. . . . Every species of suspicion was raised against it. "It was a movement to push in the thin edge of the wedge and disrupt the Parliamentary Party." "It was a piece of Quixotism which only O'Brien could take up and carry foreward." "It was a subtle plan to throw the tenants at the feet of the landlords again," etc.

We are further told that, to the surprise of everyone, the much derided Tory Government passed the famous

Wyndham Act, which made skilled politicians, who had been at one time in their lives dreaming of the three F.'s, open their eyes and gasp. The Act was put into operation, and notwithstanding all appeals to the contrary, the farmers and landlords of the country accepted it. The universality of the nation's acceptance, the manner in which the whole country leaped into sudden prosperity, the spirits of the people raised to the summit of security from the depths of despondency, is the refutation of such pessimists, is the nation's verdict on the policy of conference and conciliation.

Of his friend William O'Brien, Canon Sheehan has this to say in the English monthly just mentioned: "Mr. O'Brien is one of those men who must excite violent antipathies as well as unbounded enthusiasm. It is said he is an idealist, a fanatic, a kind of cloud-gatherer who dreams a good deal, but who has not a firm grip of the earth on which he stands. Strange to say, we have formed just the opposite conclusion. It is quite true that in the eyes of this much materialized and commercialized generation there is a touch of Quixotism in the man who threw up ten to twelve hundred a year in a great journalistic appointment to take up the editorship of *United Ireland* at a nominal salary of four hundred (of which he received one-half), and there is also a touch of Quixotism in the man who flung a thousand pounds amongst the poor of Mallow, when probably he had hardly a thousand shillings left. And there is something of old-world romance about the man who would have thrown himself, like Winkelried, on the naked bayonets of the soldiers at the Green Park, Youghal, to assert the right of free speech, and in the outlaw, who, like Dwyer of the Glens, and many another hero of Irish romance, had his home on the mountainside when the Curates of Cloyne remained up all night, their supper tables ready, waiting for the tap at the window that would tell them that the fugitive from English persecution was to be their honored guest. . . . But with all that Mr. O'Brien has been a practical politician, and all his forecasts were verified, and every project of his brought to completion, except when he was thwarted by his own

countrymen. . . . We have never met an Irish priest who has been fifteen or twenty years abroad, in America, in Australia or on the Continent, who did not break at once into the prologue: 'How narrow, how insular, how reactionary you are all here; it must be the close boundaries and the stooping skies that make you all so limited in your ideas. Abroad we have differences in religion, etc., but we are all citizens of the commonwealth under which we live, and we would no more think of excluding a man from the privileges of citizenship on account of his religion than we would think of quarreling with the color of his necktie.'"

But we must let others speak, whose intimate part in the conflict entitles them to an exceptional hearing in this connection:

Canon Sheehan, who in his own parish had proved the inestimable blessings of the Land Conference settlement, by transferring the ownership of practically every acre within its boundaries from the landlords to the cultivators, on terms which have brought unexampled prosperity and happiness to the people's homes, and dispelled all the old suspicions and bitterness between classes and sects, saw with anguish the campaign of shortsighted politicians for the destruction of the policy which had already effected such wonders. He foresaw with an unerring vision that the result of permitting the agrarian conflict to be used for politicians' ends would be to defeat the fairest opportunity that ever offered of combining all sorts and conditions of Irishmen in mapping out a scheme of national self-government which would complete the edifice of Irish freedom. He never doubted that the abuse levelled at every Irish Unionist who evinced Home Rule sympathies, the expulsion of Mr. Wyndham, Lord Dudley and Sir Antony MacDonnell from Dublin Castle and the repudiation of the spirit of conciliation and forgiveness which inspired the Land Conference Settlement, would inevitably reopen the old party and sectarian sores as between Irishmen, and the disaster was completed when the old broadminded national movement was dominated by a secret organization whose main object became the division of offices and patronage at the hands of the English Liberals among its own members upon the sole plea of their being Catholics. He plainly foresaw that the effect must be both to demoralize the

young Irishmen who were taught to look to corrupt aims of this sort as their purpose in life, and to arouse a counter movement of selfish sectarianism among the Protestants of Ulster.

All who pointed out those dangers, however, were set upon with a ferocity, open and secret, from which a man of Canon Sheehan's exquisite sensitiveness shrank as the delicate mediaeval glass of Venice is said to have shrunk at the touch of poison. He possessed a gift of lofty eloquence which might have made him a power in the public arena, but his humble soul clung to the calm of the contemplative life; he recoiled from the stern mission of a Savonarola amidst the factions of Florence. He felt that the higher interests of Catholicity were being compromised as well as those of a broad-minded nationality, but how was the gentle country priest to stem the tide without platform encounters and newspaper savageries which to him presented an ordeal more odious than the most painful forms of martyrdom? He could and did utter his own solemn warnings both in the memorable opening article of the *Cork Free Press* and above all in the *Graves at Kilmorna*, which no man of intelligence can now read without seeming to hear some divine note of prophecy sounding in every chapter. But for the rest he could only view the contest from afar in the seclusion of his beloved garden "under the cedars and the stars," and could but mournfully confide his fears — indeed, politically speaking, his despair — to some occasional intimate visitor, during the years while for the sublime spectacle of the United Ireland of 1903 was substituted a Protestant Ulster armed to the teeth against Home Rule and an Irish Parliamentary Party sinking deeper and deeper into servility to the English Liberals and smiting all Nationalists of the old traditions who uttered a warning voice as "factionists" or "traitors."

The great Irishman has been spared the sight of the saddest spectacle of all — that of the men who had stung the Ulster Covenanters to arms by their derision and by their mad race to monopolize all governmental office and emolument, seeking to disarm their hostility now by separating six of Ireland's most historic counties into an Orange Free State of which the successor of St. Patrick in Armagh was to be a subject, and whose armed Lodges were to become the custodians of the bones of Hugh O'Neill and Owen Roe and of their glorious battlefields. But nobody can read the *Graves at Kilmorna* understandingly without perceiving in it Canon Sheehan's sad conclusion that Ireland lay

once more in the mire of Parliamentary corruption from which Fenianism had rescued it in his boyhood days. More striking still was the perspicacity with which he foresaw that, in our own days as in the Fenian days, corruption in Parliament was bound to provoke the reaction of self-sacrifice, whatever its "foolishness" in the eyes of sordid politicians, which has always been the saving salt of the Irish soul, and which led the young poets and idealists of the late Dublin insurrection to purchase the purification of the National Cause with their blood, bravely and unselfishly shed. Canon Sheehan would assuredly believe that their self-immolation was richly rewarded by the fact that the most misguided of the politicians who wrecked the matchless opportunity of 1903, have now been brought to proclaim in the House of Commons, as though it were a discovery of their own, the wisdom of that policy of Conference, Conciliation and Consent which for twelve years men like Canon Sheehan were forced to look despairingly on, while they mocked and persecuted it. In his patriotism, as in his ascents to the highest regions of religious thought, he stands already vindicated.[1]

[1] Memorial by Wm. O'Brien, M.P.

V

EDUCATIONAL WORK

CANON SHEEHAN, seeing that the municipal authorities at home deferred to his judgment in matters that concerned the welfare of the people, gradually urged definite measures for the development of educational opportunities. He had the schools of the district remodeled. The Christian Brothers, sons of the saintly Edmund Ignatius Rice, whose admirable methods of teaching have procured for them an enviable reputation among all classes of people throughout Ireland, had been brought to Doneraile, in 1869, by Dr. Croke. Their schools have an excellent record under the Intermediate Commissioners. Besides the Primary Schools at Doneraile, they conduct Technical and Manual Training classes. These are under the supervision of the Dublin Department of Education and the County Council. There is also a splendidly equipped Scientific Laboratory, managed by the Brothers, under the same Department. It would be difficult to parallel a like set of schools in so small a community as this, not merely for Ireland but for any country in the world, however progressive.

In the Intermediate Examinations of the Christian Brothers' schools the Canon invariably took an active and keen interest; and he encouraged the boys by his beautiful and instructive exhortations on all public occasions.

The religious of the Presentation Order, whose house was founded in 1818, have the care of about 400 girls, gratuitously instructed and clothed. The course includes, besides the elementary branches of study, both plain and ornamental needlework. Just before the famine years 940 children attended the schools; and the old parishioners are fond of recalling how beautiful the army of little ones looked as

PRESENTATION CONVENT AND GIRLS' SCHOOL
DONERAILE

"BRIDGE HOUSE" AND BOYS' SCHOOL, DONERAILE

each child appeared in its white cap and pinafore. Pupils of these schools are found in all parts of the world, and they invariably retain great affection for the Presentation nuns at Doneraile. The present community numbers 22 Sisters, who, besides directing the National School, conduct a lace and industrial department.

It has already been said that the Canon visited regularly the seven schools under his pastoral care. They were: the Christian Brothers' school for boys and the girls' Institute at the Convent in Doneraile; two schools, one for boys and one for girls, at Shanballymore; and three mixed schools at Baltydaniel, Skehana, and Ballyvonaire. All the outlying schools were taught by lay teachers. To reach some of them meant a drive of several hours; but the Canon never wearied of the task of making his visits. He loved his children with a fervor and tenderness that one would hardly have suspected in the grave and stately priest; and he watched their careers long after they had gone out of school, so that he might help and direct them in their difficulties. Owing to his influence with the officials of the county, and their confidence in his judgment, he was able to place the young men and women who had left his schools, in good and honorable positions; and most of them were his pride and consolation in after years. Nothing seemed to touch his heart with deeper grief than to see any of the children stray from the path of duty or virtue. It was the one thing, we are told, that would cast a cloud over him until better reports were forthcoming.

One of the local teachers writes to us: "His influence over the young men was unbounded. He had established several literary societies to meet the special needs of each class. He invariably attended their meetings, and people envied the youths who were privileged to listen to the talks he gave them. These chats, or lectures as some preferred to call them, were characterized by an intimate and fascinating eloquence of which those who heard him only in public discourses could form no adequate conception."

He provided all kinds of entertainments for the young —

musical, literary, dramatic; and it was largely to gratify the Canon's desire to see these entertainments carried out with due effect, that Lady Castletown built the Town Hall in Doneraile a few years before his death. That building has a stage, green rooms, reading rooms and billiard table. On a stone over the gateway is this inscription: "This Hall was erected by Lady Castletown in memory of the Viscountess Doneraile. 1910."

At the football and cricket matches and in the hurling field the Canon was as eager to promote the sport as any youth could have been to enjoy it. He saw to it that the teams were well equipped with bats and balls and other requisites. The boys were proud of their pastor, and showed splendid spirit and sportsmanship in competition. Indeed one of the most touching incidents of the affection they bore him was manifested on the occasion of his home coming from the hospital at Cork, where he had gone for an operation shortly before his death. When the men heard of his return, hoping that he had fully recovered from his illness, and thinking that he was to be with them again for good, they obtained permission from their employers to cease work, and walked six miles to meet him at the station. They were prepared to draw the carriage in which he was to ride home. The local band was to accompany the procession and the whole town had arranged to make a holiday, with fireworks and tar barrels aflame at night, in token of their joy. It is to be noted that in this spirit the Protestant youth, the employes of the mill, and the men at the Manor and Park, took equal interest. When the Canon heard of the preparations he forbade them, saying that he preferred to slip into the town quietly and that they could have their fun later on.

Whilst Canon Sheehan labored unremittingly to give to his young people every opportunity for mental and industrial improvement, he was opposed to the indiscriminate popularization of educational facilities by which the village youth would be enticed toward professional courses without the prospect of subsequent success in such

careers. His argument was that when a youth had reached the grade of education suited to his condition in life and his special talent, he should at once be placed in a position to take up work in which he would apply his knowledge and ability. To give a lad an education in one definite direction, and then leave him without means of following it up, was, in his estimate, doing the youth an injury. The stimulating of aspirations that could not be sustained was sure to beget discontent.

In his correspondence with the local representative of higher education, the Canon frequently pointed out that much of the trouble in Ireland among the younger generation sprang from a system of education which offered to a highly intelligent people means of training whereby their ambitions were left unsatisfied. "These young men are apt to degenerate," he said, "by becoming soured; often this disposition leads them to become the originators of foolish and impracticable schemes, and eventually fomenters of discontent and opposition against the Government which to them is responsible for their unequal lot in life." His principle was to train boys and girls according to their talents, with a definite view to their future occupation or position in life; and to see to it that they lost no time in getting to work after they had left school or college.

"We hear a great deal," he writes, "about 'the poor man's son,' and the necessity of giving clever boys a chance of developing undoubted talents in the halls of some university. It is a specious cry because it holds an elemental truth — that it is a deordination in nature to have splendid talents allowed to run waste; and to see brave young geniuses who might be Newtons or Lavaters condemned for life to the spade and mattock. But the temptation lies in this — that ambitious parents, confident of their children's ability, or ambitious teachers, anxious for the honor of their schools, might be induced to demand and give special time and attention to some favored few to the detriment of the many. If a teacher thinks he has discovered a particularly clever lad, who will probably take

a scholarship, and if he is willing to devote special time to his development, by all means let him do so; but it must be outside school hours. It would be a crime to take away from ninety pupils the teacher's time and attention for the purpose of developing one case of talent. For, again let us repeat, and it cannot be repeated too often, the crying evil of our country and our time is the lack of ordinary decent education amongst the masses of the people; and that the object of the National, and other systems of Primary Education, is not to discover, or develop, the genius of one pupil; but to diffuse throughout the entire community a sound elementary education that will qualify them to act the part of intelligent and responsible citizens.

"How necessary this is amid the rapid developments through which the country is now passing, should be evident to the most superficial thinker. For good or ill, the processes of successive Reform Bills have eventuated in manhood suffrage. Every individual therefore is part and parcel of the administration of the country. To commit that administration into the hands of an unthinking, unlettered, and therefore irresponsible population would be to pledge the country to disaster. Yet this is what we have to face, unless some revolutionary methods be adopted which will bring the means of education within the power of every citizen, and the blessings of a liberal education into the homes of the humblest cottier or laborer."

THE SCHEME OF NATIONAL SCHOOLS FOR IRELAND

In order to give some definite expression to what he thought was needed in the elementary schools, Canon Sheehan made an elaborate analysis of the system of education in Ireland, in which he compares the old methods with those recently introduced under the régime of English reform. His views regarding the value of personal training as well as vocation for the teacher are worthy of study. Equally pertinent are his comments on what is deemed the essential program of studies in the primary schools. The following reflections on the subject are taken from an unpublished manuscript

which Canon Sheehan had sent to Lady Gilbert, and which was called forth by a request in an official Report for the United States Department of Education. The Report to which the Canon's criticisms refer was presented by the former Inspector of Irish schools, under the Intermediate Board, Mr. Cloudesley Brereton.

The Analysis begins by commenting upon the published Census of Illiterates in Ireland.

"The census returns of 'Illiterate' persons in Ireland are very misleading. I do not believe there is wilful deception of the officers; but the standard of education is so very low that thousands are returned as capable of reading and writing, who are barely able to spell laboriously through the columns of a newspaper or scrawl their names in a half illegible manner on a bank-bill. Most of these semi-illiterate persons have passed through the usual classes or standards in the Primary Schools; but owing to causes which I shall afterwards specifically mention, they abandon the habits of reading and writing after leaving school — and sink back into a condition of almost absolute illiteracy. Anyone who has ever witnessed a few peasants drawing a bill on a village bank, or signing a paper for the purchase of land, and seen their mental agony whilst they try to decipher the meaning of the document and then append their signatures, will testify to this. And what is true of our agricultural districts, is equally true of manufacturing centers, where the young lads and lassies, after two years, have almost entirely lost the faculty of reading and writing. As for a taste for reading anything beyond some light novel or the weekly political newspaper, it is absolutely unknown."

In attempting to explain the failure of the modern system of teaching introduced in Ireland, Canon Sheehan indicates some inconsistencies in the methods of selecting the teachers.

"There is a marked difference between the old untrained schoolmaster and the young teachers who now come out, year after year, from our Training Colleges, and pass at once into our schools as assistants or principals. With the old generation, teaching was something like what Carlyle

was always dreaming of and talking about — a kind of lofty vocation, a priestly function, which he would not rank lower than that of a kirk-minister, or voluntary preacher under the Free Church. The principal teachers then were all old men, who had been trained under fiery discipline, and were rather too anxious that the character of the young should be annealed, mentally and morally, in the same way. The discipline of the schools was severe. Corporal punishment was administered in a manner which would send a teacher of to-day into penal servitude. The hours were long, generally from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. In many places there were morning sessions from 7 A.M. to 9 A.M.; and night schools were the rule not the exception. There were no stated times for vacations. The old teachers strenuously objected to such a waste of time; and in many towns of Ireland to-day weird traditions have come down of desperate attempts made by the boys to 'bar out' the masters, until the latter yielded to the demand of at least a short cessation from school work.

"It is rather an interesting speculation why these old men were so much averse to granting periodical holidays, or lessening the hours of daily school-work. There is really no explanation of such an attitude, so totally different from everything we are accustomed to in modern life, except that those men had conceived a perfect passion for work, that solitude was unbearable, that they were never happy without the book and the ferule and the daily worship of a crowd of awe-stricken and reverent pupils. It must be remembered that at that time traveling was almost unknown except amongst the wealthier classes. No teacher would think of wasting weeks at the seaside, much less of going abroad, and, — a very important factor in their monotonous, but singularly useful lives was, — that they were all deeply conscientious men, and that in addition to their obligations to the State they had, owing to the then prevailing system of school-fees, a sense of personal duty to the pupils, and a corresponding interest in their educational advancement.

"There never was a bolder or wiser plan, from their own standpoint, than the attempt of British ministers from time to time to subsidize the Irish Catholic clergy; and never a wiser policy than that adopted by these latter in thwarting and rejecting such attempts. And for the same reason, there never was a greater, and alas! more irremediable mistake than that made by the National Board of Education in abolishing school fees. It converted the teachers into State officials, and destroyed all personal interest in their pupils. And it broke up that sympathy, arising out of mutual assistance, that existed between the teachers and the parents of the children. It turned the schools into government Lycées, controlled by penal laws; and while it removed from the consciences of the teachers that sense of commutative justice that arose from the personal obligation of giving value for the stipends received, it took away at the same time from the minds of the parents that keen interest in the educational progress of their children that naturally is felt where it is well paid for. Hence to-day we find, in the few voluntary schools of the country which are not under the management of the National Board, and where fees from one penny to twopence a week up to ten shillings a quarter are paid by the pupils, the attendance is cent per cent; whereas, in the National Schools, where no fees are paid, and where very often books, paper, slates, pens, etc. are supplied gratis to the children, the attendance seldom reaches beyond 65 per cent of the pupils on the rolls.

"The principals and assistants in all National Schools to-day are comparatively young men, most of whom have been recently trained at some recognized college here and there in the country; but with no further experience. They have learned to teach scientifically. Many of them have no idea of making teaching a profession. Conscious of much ability, they determine that that school shall be a stepping-stone to something higher — a little pause in the race of life before striding on to the final goal. The little children are no longer the sons and daughters of friends,

who are to be watched over with more than paternal vigilance; and whose futures are an object of as much solicitude to the teacher as his own. Unlike the old teachers, he does not look forward to the time when that brilliant young barrister will call at his school; and thank him publicly for all the wise counsel, all the sage admonitions that he received; or the young priest or minister, flushed with the glory of ordination, will steal in and greet his old master and give him his blessing; or that young girl, who has made a prosperous match, will roll up in her carriage and place a bunch of violets on the master's desk without a word. All that has gone; the pupils are now so many units, who have to be worked up into decimals to prove to Treasury officials that there has been a certain number of wild Irish in attendance at that school; and that there is no loophole, alas! for escape. His salary, even to the decimals, must be paid.

"It would be the greatest injustice here, if we let it for a moment be supposed that the modern teacher is indifferent, or careless about his pupils, except in so far as they help him to his salary and increments. But in view of the fact that there is scarcely a teacher in the country who has settled down permanently in his locality, without hope of a better school in a more comfortable place; and in view of the fact that so many Irish teachers are flying away to England, or seeking situations in the Civil Service, and in view of the fact that there are no longer those mutual relations between teachers and pupils that arose from the payment of school fees, it is no exaggeration to say that the calling of a National Teacher in Ireland has sunk down from the Carlylean idea to one of mere officialdom — the paid hireling of the State."

In order to bring home his contention that the teachers in the National Schools need to be safeguarded from an undue ambition that causes them to seek promotion at the cost of efficiency, Canon Sheehan dwells on the necessity of securing for all teachers an income adequate to the dignity of their profession:

"I doubt if the educationists of Ireland have ever realized

the dignity and importance of the office of teacher. They are so accustomed to consider teaching as a mere means of livelihood, and teachers as mere Civil Servants, that it must be difficult, if not impossible, for these latter to rise to a higher conception of their profession. In fact, it is only once or twice in a generation that some profound and reverent thinker seizes on the idea that, next in dignity and honor, after the sacred professions, comes the very exalted and honorable vocation of training the young minds of the country. It is difficult to see why the profession of teaching should be regarded as less honorable than the legal or medical professions. If we judge by its importance, and not by its emoluments, it should rank far beyond them. If we are to judge by its services to the State, there is no comparison. If we are to judge by its influence on humanity, it stands out the premier secular profession. Probably it will take many generations to understand this. But it should be said at once that in our Training Colleges, especially those under the management of religious guides, this view of the sacredness and solemnity of the teaching office should be kept before the minds of the pupils in season and out of season. They have got to deal not with human decomposition and disease; not with human crime and folly and dishonesty; not with mechanical contrivances and dull, inert matter; but with human souls, which are placed in their hands for formation; and which receive at their hands that bias towards good and evil that must influence all their after lives; and make them a burden and a curse, or a blessing and a help, towards the entire community.

"Hence I am of opinion that at once the material interests of the teachers, their salaries and pensions, should be placed in such a condition of adequacy and proportion that would liberate the minds of teachers from all anxiety about their futures, and leave them absolutely free to devote themselves to the more spiritual side of their exalted calling. I do not think therefore that the salary of a teacher should be made dependent upon the size of his school, or the number of his pupils. For thence arises the deadly temptation of

regarding himself as a mere bird-of-passage, who has not and never can have an interest in his pupils, but is ever looking out in the daily paper for an advertisement for principal in some more populous place, whence again he is to migrate when the opportunity offers. On the other hand, reason, justice, public opinion and common sense demand that, when a teacher has honestly and conscientiously devoted his life to the services of the State, he should be protected by the State by adequate pensions from any hardship of poverty or sickness, when incapacitated from work by old age or infirmity.

"Under the old system, again, a great deal of initiative, or voluntary work, was permitted to the teachers and with their extraordinary zeal they eagerly availed of the permission. The subjects marked on the time-tables were very limited in number; and the educational capacities of the teachers did not reach beyond them. But what they knew, they knew well; and they had the talent to impart it thoroughly. The inspection was loose and unmethodical. The Managers rarely visited the schools; the Inspectors came once a year for the annual examination. There was a certain freedom permissible in the arrangement of the lessons, so that if the boys and girls had a fancy or an aptitude for a particular subject or science, they were allowed to exercise it without molestation. And if a class, interested in geography, or mathematics, seemed to covet a few minutes more in that class, no objection was made. We remember one clear instance where two young lads of 12 to 14 years were permitted by the master to spend the seven hours a day for the last two years of their course in working out problems in algebra, or exercises (or as they were called 'cuts') in Euclid to the exclusion of every other subject. This gave them an extraordinary power of mental concentration that made all succeeding subjects comparatively easy.

"The results of the old system were at least twofold:

(1) thoroughness in teaching;

(2) a passion for self-improvement on the pupil's part.

As we have already said, the subjects were limited. They embraced:

READING	EUCLID
WRITING	ALGEBRA
ARITHMETIC	MENSURATION
GEOGRAPHY	

And all of these, with the exception perhaps of reading (the comparative unimportance of which we shall discuss hereafter), were taught in a manner which is now impossible.

"And the teachers had the singular and unique success of implanting in the minds of their pupils a sense that, on leaving school, they were *but commencing their life's education, which would end only with life.* Hence they turned out generation after generation of reading men, eager to supplement the elementary education of their childhood by the larger reading of after life. The very fact that so much liberty of initiative was allowed, that studies were not altogether task work, that there was a kind of sympathy between teachers and pupils arising out of a mutual love for kindred subjects, would go far to account for this. The eye of the pupil was upon his master; the eye of the master on his pupil."

Canon Sheehan shows further how the new system of instruction has allowed primary education to overlap Intermediate studies; and these latter to encroach upon the University curriculum. "We have heard 'Analysis' taught to little girls in the Fourth Standard in a manner that might suit young graduates in a Scotch University; and the higher grades of Tonic Sol-Fa taught to girls who would much prefer the latest music-hall chorus from London or Liverpool. There are two truths which seem never to have been grasped by Irish educationists. The first is that they rate the average intelligence of Irish children altogether too highly; the second is, that education should also be adaptation, that is, in the great majority of cases, the preparation and training of children for their positions in after life.

"The present idea appears to be, that children's minds should be made not only repositories of universal information, but should also be trained to a degree of mental efficiency that is only attained in the grand climacteric of life. The question really is, whether the child's mind is to be made a storehouse like a doll's shop, full of all small but pretty things, or whether the tastes and talents of the child shall be cultivated towards something higher to be acquired in after life. This latter is our opinion; and that is the reason we insist so strongly on the right of allowing some originality or initiative in the selection of subjects by teachers or pupils.

"A simple example will suffice to show how, in one department alone, immense trouble is taken in one manner of handling a very common subject which practically is of no utility whatever in after life, except to a chosen few; and no trouble whatever is taken in teaching the same subject in that manner and under that aspect where it might be universally profitable.

"How many children in any National School in Ireland will be called upon in their after lives to read aloud either to an individual, or some select gathering? How many will become professional elocutionists? One boy out of five hundred will be a clergyman, and must read distinctly and with a certain grace. One girl out of ten thousand may be a companion to a lady who may require her to read for her at night, or during illness. The remaining legions will never as a rule be called upon to read distinctly, to pronounce correctly, or understand the proper emphasis of words or phrases. Yet, what time, what labor, what pains, are expended on an accomplishment which will seldom or never be requisitioned in after life. Let it be remembered that we are not making light of the accomplishment. It is a very beautiful one; but we are speaking now of educational methods in their application to the utilities of after life; and there, in the vast multitude of cases, the accomplishment is practically useless. On the other hand, *reading in the sense of creating a passion for*

reading and a knowledge of what ought to be read, is never taught.

"The minds of young lads and young maidens of sixteen and seventeen are fed with the crumbs and pills of scrappy literature, — elegant extracts, bits of poetry, dissertations on political economy, etc., in which, because they are task work, the children can take no interest whatever. The beauties of English literature, the vast treasures that have been accumulated for centuries by the rich and prolific authorship of great and enlightened men; the hoard of precious thoughts that lie hidden there beneath the covers of books which modern competition has made available for the slenderest purse — all are unknown and concealed from eager and inquiring spirits, who then go out into the world to feed their minds on the only *pabulum* of which they have ever heard — the garbage of London flimsies, or the poison of party political organs, where there is neither "truth, justice, or judgment." A taste for reading — I mean reading anything wholesome or elevating — is almost unknown in this country. A young Englishman, or a young Scotchman, will be found to have a pretty fair idea of the English classics — a pretty fair idea of what books are worth reading and what books are worthless. And, considering the fact that really half the joy and pleasure of most lives is to be found in books, is it not pitiable that our children's minds should be so starved that, in after life, they cannot distinguish food from poison — the great thoughts that elevate and refine from the pitiable trivialities that weaken the intellect, lower the standards of ethical and moral worth, and create an effeminate and thoughtless people swayed by passion, and regardless, because ignorant of the higher principles of reason and public morality?

"With regard to the time devoted to education in Ireland, we find that 200 days is the minimum exacted by the National Board. That is to say, the working days in our schools are little more than half the days of the year. Setting aside Sundays and holidays, there should be 306 working days at least; and allowing the 40 days, which is the maxi-

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mum of vacation allowed by the Board, there should be 266 working days in the year. Yet a minimum of 200 days is all that is required of our teachers or pupils. And each working day means but four hours. Now, considering the multiplicity of subjects required by the Board and the very limited time that is imperative and obligatory on the teachers, it follows that only the most superficial education can be imparted to the children of the country. Add to this the number of days that are lost by individual pupils, who are absent through sickness, epidemic, or otherwise; by agricultural requirements; and through the thousand and one excuses that are made by negligent and ignorant parents; and it will be seen how impossible it is to create in Ireland a body of youths of both sexes who may be said to leave school even fairly equipped for the responsibilities of life. There seems to be no reason why (except in the case of infants) the school hours should not be extended to five; there is no reason why, as in former times, Saturdays should not be half-holidays; there is no reason why a uniform standard of vacations, — allowing a fortnight at Christmas, ten days at Easter and four weeks at summer, should not be rigidly maintained."[1]

"The Night Extension School was an admirable idea. It failed; and it failed because the youth of the country were not already prepared by the day schools to recommence their education. They were never taught that education meant anything but task work without design or object but to help the teacher to live; and they had no notion of commencing such task work again, when tired and weary after the manual labor of the day.

"With regard to the program of Primary Education let it be again insisted upon that the systems should not be allowed to overlap each other; but that each, Primary, Intermediate, and University, should be kept rigidly within its own limits. Hence what are called 'accomplishments,' the frills and decorations of education, should be absolutely

[1] In Germany, by Act of Parliament, the primary and secondary schools throughout the Empire open at the same time and close simultaneously.

excluded from Primary Education. *For the object of Primary Education is not to discover talent, not to help on a favored few, not to create reputations for clever teachers or pupils; but to extend the blessings of an elementary training amongst the vast masses of the population.* To raise these masses up from the frightful ignorance in which they now spend their lives; to introduce into their homes something of the 'sweetness and light' of modern civilization; to show them, the poorest of the poor, and the humblest of the humble, that human life has higher issues than are involved in mere drudgery for daily bread; and, in a practical sense, to show them how to avail of the vast utilities that lie beneath their hands, and which only a fairly educated people can adequately develop — this is the sole object of Primary Education in Ireland. It may be fairly said that 90 per cent of the children frequenting our schools will have to earn their bread by manual labor. It would seem reasonable, then, that, whilst technical education should hold a primary place, everything that savors of mere 'accomplishments,' or that belongs to a higher and secondary course, should be rigidly excluded. Let us now see how the program for National Schools meets these demands.

"The entire program in an ordinary Girls' School embraces the following subjects:

Reading;	Drawing: —	Grammar;
Writing;	Geometrical;	Parsing;
Composition;	Freehand;	Analysis;
Dictation;	Scale;	Tonic Sol-Fa;
Mental Arithmetic;	Geography: —	Staff Notation;
Written Arithmetic;	Local;	Kindergarten;
	Physical;	Object Lessons;
	Mathematical;	Hand and Eye Training;

Cookery;	Laundry;	Drill;
Irish;	Sewing;	Knitting;
History;	Fancy Work;	Crochet;

Religious Instruction.

This is an extensive program for two hundred days at

four hours a day; and one wonders whether it is possible for pupils to obtain more than the merest superficial and elementary knowledge of these many subjects.

"As mere 'accomplishments,' such subjects as Freehand, Geometrical and Scale drawing, Analysis (which is only fit for University students), Tonic Sol-Fa, Fancy Work, Mathematical and Physical Geography, might be struck out at once. Imagine a class of grown girls staring at a blackboard, crowded with geometrical figures, and knowing all the time that in a few weeks they will be milking cows and washing clothes! Or a class struggling through the intricacies of Tonic Sol-Fa, when we know that every girl will discard all that in a few weeks and pick up the latest music-hall song from London! And imagine little children in a 4th Standard puzzling their poor brains over subject, predicate, qualifying predicate, and objects, when we have known young philosophers in the Higher Colleges torturing their intellects about such things.

"Surely, so far as mere literary training is concerned, it should be quite enough for working boys and girls to know *how* to read, and *what* to read; to write a decent legible hand; to compose an interesting and grammatical letter; to speak distinctly and clearly without mouthing, mumbling, or slang; to know how to tote up figures and keep accounts, and understand the intricacies of buying and selling; for boys, some technical training should be made indispensable; and for girls, cooking and laundry; and for both, some elementary knowledge of hygiene.

"It seems incredible, but it is a fact, that the ordinary people who form the bulk of our population do not know, have not even the faintest idea of how their bodies are constructed, what are the organs of the body and how placed; what are the natures of specific diseases, how they are contracted, how they may be prevented, or cured. Many children have the most fantastic notions of the organs of the body and their location; whilst the processes of circulation, respiration, and digestion are sealed mysteries to them. Most of the diseases of middle life are the results

of the indiscretions of youth; and many of these indiscretions are the result of ignorance as well as misdirected passion. I once heard a young man, who in the very springtime and promise of a useful and even distinguished life, was suddenly stricken by a hereditary malady, curse bitterly the parents who had brought him into the world. How many young men and women have reason to resent bitterly the culpable neglect of parents and teachers, who through false shame, or more often through indifference, allowed these young and unprotected creatures to enter upon the solemn duties of life without a word that could guard them from bodily disease or spiritual corruption! Surely one of the first things that should be taught the young of both sexes is to protect the temple of their bodies and save themselves from the years of agony and the premature deaths that are the result of the neglect or the indifference of their inexperienced years. A good deal of attention is now given in some schools to the care of the teeth and the eyes and the hair; and some progress has been made. But there are deeper and more radical problems which ought to be faced."

Canon Sheehan is careful to state that the teaching of these subjects should be so formulated as to make the purpose of safeguarding virtue simultaneously with health quite emphatic. He next refers to those practical accomplishments of nursing, domestic science, etc., which girls need to be taught.

"For girls, a knowledge of the science of nursing should be made equally indispensable. Nursing of infants and of the sick is the natural duty and calling of women. Apart from argument, the eagerness and zeal with which the profession of nursing has been taken up of late years by hundreds of young women throughout the land is a proof of this. If there were not some natural instinct, some divinely-planted calling in this direction, these ladies, many of whom have been delicately reared, could never face the hardships and the painful surroundings which are inseparable from the sick-room. This instinct should be fostered and

encouraged in our young girls, so that in their own homes and families they may be able at any time to render their parents or their brothers and sisters such help as can only come from a trained and experienced hand. Practical education of this kind would make our young people more studious about themselves, more intelligent helpers to others, than if they could draw circles with the genius of a Giotto, or could analyze the longest sentence in Ruskin."

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

In the ever-recurring question of University education for Catholic students in Ireland Canon Sheehan was naturally much interested. He had been repeatedly invited to lecture to the medical students who, after matriculation at the Royal University, came under the care of the Jesuit Fathers in the Catholic University College. The relation of Catholic students to Trinity College, which in many respects was the national University, had been persistently agitated since 1873, when the Fawcett Act abolished all religious tests for admission. The correspondence between Canon Sheehan and some of the professors of Dublin University College, notably Father George O'Neill, S.J., who had studied in the Universities of Prague and Paris, and who was occupying at the time the chair of English Literature and Philology at the Dublin College, shows that the Canon did not entertain much hope of independent recognition for the Catholic body through the Royal Commission. He believed that if the Catholic students in large numbers attended Trinity College and asserted their religious rights, the academic authorities would eventually be forced to take cognizance of their demands. Meanwhile it was necessary to keep up Catholic organization among the students, as was being done by the Jesuit Fathers. They had been in charge of University College for many years and had supported it without any subsidy from the Government. In July, 1905, Canon Sheehan wrote to his friend in Dublin, commenting upon an address made by Archbishop Walsh on the position of Catholics in the matter of higher education.

BALLYCOTTON, *July*

DEAR FATHER O'NEILL,

Your letter was before me last Saturday when I came from Retreat . . . I assure you it (the Archbishop's speech) gave me great pleasure for many reasons, but mostly for the indication it gave, that it was still quite possible for us, Irish Catholics, to sink all minor issues in the face of a common danger, and effect a combination of force that would at least embarrass the enemy.

I do not think Dr. McDonald really put forward his ideas about *Trinity* as practicable, but merely as tentative of public opinion. His idea seems outside the range of possibilities just now; but there is a widespread belief that if 300 Catholic students could enter Trinity with the direct sanction of the Bishop, the Government would throw us a University before many years. For myself I abandoned all hope of a C. University from the day I was an unwilling and unhappy witness of the reception of the King at Maynooth.

I think . . . that Trinity has a reputation it does not deserve. But it certainly has had a few remarkable men in our own time. I had recently two different accounts of their spirit. One to the effect that the Junior Profession are of a totally different spirit from that of Salmon, Traill, etc., and are disposed to be extremely liberal towards Catholics. The other to the effect that all are animated with intense bigotry and intolerance of anything Catholic. This latter came from one who has been in the inner circle.

Strange to say, my acquaintance with Trinity men is limited to that of a disreputable tramp of a graduate who came to Mallow as a tutor a quarter of a century ago, and drifted downwards to beggary. In his worst state he maintained all the manners and dignity of a gentleman; and was always polished, suave, *reserved.* I underline the latter word, because I feel it is just where we fail most conspicuously. But I was much struck with his accent and intonation and the (to me) peculiar pronunciation of Latin and French. The man carried an *atmosphere* with him; and I often asked myself, what was it? Was it that indefinable thing called *University* training?

You may thank the laziness of this delightful place for the infliction of this letter. I wish you were here, and that we could exchange ideas.

Always sincerely, my dear Fr. O'Neill,

P. A. SHEEHAN.

If at this time the Canon's knowledge of Trinity was limited to the acquaintance with the tramp whom he mentions in the foregoing letter, the men at the University were not unconscious of nor indifferent to the educational views of the retiring parish priest of Doneraile. In later years they tendered him their homage in various ways, of which the following letter of the Honorable Judge M. J. Bourke, M.A., K.C., of County Cork, gives an indication:

1·3·1912.
87 LOWER BAGGOT STR., DUBLIN.

MY DEAR FATHER PAT,

There is a strong desire among the higher literary men in Trinity College to make your acquaintance. The Vice Chancellor of the University (Judge Madden) has asked me as a favor to secure your presence as his guest there at a dinner, at which he will have some interesting literary men to meet you. He is himself an enthusiastic admirer of your books (as indeed are all the Judges and the Benchers of King's Inns), and he is particularly anxious to meet you. He is, as you are aware, a distinguished scholar himself, and carries great weight in University and educational matters. . . . It is the highest compliment the Vice-Chancellor can pay. He has only the privilege of asking two guests, and I am only invited as a medium of securing you.

You must come and stay with us while in Dublin. Your bedroom will be ready and you will be perfectly free and at home.

MATT. J. BOURKE.

Probably the best way to form an estimate of the influence which Canon Sheehan exercised in the direction of University education for Catholic students will be found in the following request by Father Joseph Darlington, S.J., Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Mental Science at University College, Dublin, and governor of the Catholic Medical School. The letter gives us at the same time an insight into the character of the work done for the social uplift of the city of Dublin through the faculty of University College.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,
STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN.
Nov·V·1903.

VERY REV. DEAR DR. SHEEHAN,

At the instance of His Grace the Archbishop, and of many interested in Dublin, and elsewhere, the Catholic University Professors and Students of the Arts and Medical Colleges, living in Dublin, formed themselves last session — towards its close — into a special Conference of St. Vincent de Paul for social work amid the poor of Dublin. It is called the University Conference of the Sacred Heart — and the main purpose of it is to bring the youth of Ireland into practical acquaintance with social work and questions, and with the poor, during their University career: — it is calculated to impart greater seriousness: and perception of life's dangers and responsibilities, during their student stay in Dublin: and also when the students return to their native towns and villages they might carry with them some zeal for St. Vincent de Paul work. The complaint is that the professional men and learned class are not doing much in this direction. The St. Vincent de Paul Society was founded in Paris by 6 or 7 Arts and Medical students — Ozanam, I think, was only 21 and he was the eldest: and the idea was to help the poor out of a greater knowledge and influence, rather than out of material goods: "silver and gold they had not much — but they had *knowledge*." The complaint is that the Society in Ireland is mainly carried on as an organization to give material *relief:* what truth there is in this notion, I know not.

Anyway the University Conference was started: and it contains the *best intellects* amongst the students and Professors now in Dublin: at starting we need two *things:* (1) first and foremost, an instruction on Social work, and its connection with *intelligent* men, and particularly with the *rich* in *mental* as well as in bodily goods.

(2) We must work up a few funds for the winter. His Grace has allotted to us a district in his own Parish of Westland Row, and one of the Curates there is chaplain. The weekly meetings are held in the college. (Here follows a diagram giving the boundaries of the district, which includes the area between the river [Liffey] and Brunswick street in one direction, and from O'Connell Bridge to Lombard street in the other.) That district is one of the poorest in Dublin, and it is the "dumping" ground of the

proselytisers — they have, I think, 3 (or 4 even) traps set there — a mission Hall, a child's school, a Refuge, &c.

Geoffrey Austin and *The Triumph of Failure* have done suggestive work amongst the Arts and Medical students. Those books have had, and have a moral influence. They were alluded to last night at the weekly meeting of Conference, and I was asked to write to Your Reverence to know if you could do for us, what all felt *you* alone could do so well, — i.e. lift the Conference into a sphere where its ideal would become forever a high one, —and capable of giving understanding to those concerned, as to social work and its connection with the life energies of those gifted with brains as well as money; saying something about the life and needs of the poor, etc. (The Lecture would be valuable as a pamphlet after.) The Conference would be a success, if it had just this now. Then as to the second point such a lecture would be a profit and a treat for every Conference in Dublin. They would crowd to hear it, and we could put a 1/s. or 6/d. on the door for our funds. Fr. Delaney bids me tell you from him how grateful he would be to you if you could consent to do this — in the great Hall of the College here, — the first week in December, or the last in November would be a good moment for a lecture — in its effect upon the Conferences of Dublin. You would speak indeed to all the Conferences in Ireland. I can send you any amount of material as to details or history.

Yours respect'ly and sincerely,
J. DARLINGTON, S.J.

Herein one sees what was Canon Sheehan's position in respect of University education for the youth of Ireland. For the rest, he labored to bridge over hostile antipathies by coöperation with men of influence, though non-Catholic, in the same field. For this we have the unbiased testimony of Lord Castletown, who writes: "At the time when I was, at Mr. Birrell's request, endeavoring to form a basis of consent between the various political parties, for the building up of a National University, I received immense assistance from my friend Canon Sheehan. His knowledge of what was actually wanted reached to the very root of things. As I was then Chancellor of the Royal University, we were able to work out a fairly satisfactory scheme to-

gether. I believe that the National University has been a success, and I am glad to think that my dear friend and I had some small influence in shaping its destinies."

Despite Canon Sheehan's reluctance to leave his parish, the interest which he habitually took in the educational progress of Ireland drew him into not infrequent engagements to lecture at Dublin, Cork, Limerick and other towns remote from his home. Occasionally his addresses were delivered to large bodies in which non-Catholics predominated; and if his words did not always produce the conviction that leads to conversion, they invariably made a deep impression, of which the following attestation furnishes a fair example:

TRINITY CHAMBERS, CORK,
Oct. 20, 1906.

DEAR CANON SHEEHAN,

As one of the Catholic members of the Council of the Literary and Scientific Society of this City, I cannot refrain from expressing to you my warmest congratulations on the rare intellectual treat which your lecture afforded those who had the good fortune to be present at it. I am a member of this society for more than a quarter of a century; and I have listened to some of the eminent lectures of our time being delivered under its auspices; and I can call to mind but two lecturers who made the same impression on the audience as you produced. They are the late Sir John Pope Hennessy and Dr. Molloy. It was indeed a proud position for us Catholics to find that we have among our priests men like yourself whose great ability and wisdom in voicing that ability are capable of inspiring not only the respect and applause of Catholics but equally so of Protestants who very often go to hear priests with very critical minds. I have never heard any lecturer listened to with more attention and I have rarely heard such a unanimous chorus of approval as that which your brilliant lecture produced, and when I tell you that the audience consisted of sixty per cent of Protestants and that it represented in the fullest sense the literary life of Cork, we Catholics have abundant reasons for congratulating ourselves on the splendid record made for us on Thursday evening.

May you long continue to be the standard bearer of the intellectual life of Ireland, is my earnest wish.

I am, dear Canon Sheehan,
Yours very respectfully,
M. J. STAPLETON.

Sometimes the invitations came from abroad, from Truth societies, collegiate bodies or literary associations in England or Scotland, as well as from distant parts of Ireland; and then he found it necessary to write and transmit his thoughts to be read by someone else. Occasionally he talked across the seas. In 1904 Archbishop Carr, of Melbourne, having read Canon Sheehan's address to the students at Maynooth College on "The Dawn of the Century," sent him an urgent request to contribute a paper to the Second Australian Congress. This the Canon promptly did, and the address was highly spoken of in the press. Quite apart from this are his numerous contributions to the homiletic literature of English-speaking countries printed in magazines and newspapers.

VI

CARE OF THE PARISH CHURCH

CANON SHEEHAN on entering upon his pastorate at Doneraile had, as we have seen, become responsible for the care of two churches, seven schools, and two religious communities. Two curates, separately domiciled, assisted him. Whilst all worked hand in hand for the upbuilding of the religious spirit and general welfare of the parish, it is no exaggeration to say that he took by far the larger share of the parochial duties upon himself. He preached regularly every Sunday and holyday, apart from the instructions he gave to the children. His visitation of the parish and the schools was thorough and constant. He took every opportunity of knowing his people and studying their needs. He spoke to them of the training of their children, the share they were to take in the life of the community, their work, their employers and neighbors. By these means he taught them to avoid friction and misunderstanding, and so he kept alive a spirit of harmony among the farmers and laboring classes. The employers and officials who lived in Doneraile, and who knew his prudent and disinterested ways, were glad to accept his suggestions, and there existed a mutually benevolent attitude on the part of the population and the district authorities.

It was well understood that to be in disgrace with Canon Sheehan was to be in disgrace with the community, for it was a sure sign of being in the wrong. With his own people he insisted upon punctuality and the fulfillment of their obligations to the tradesmen and storekeepers; he counseled at all times economy and thrift and saw to it that just wages were given the men. Exactness and promptness in making necessary repairs, especially for the church and school,

were characteristic of his management. Everywhere he advocated the maintenance of public and domestic order. To protect the people from the intolerance of petty officials he urged regularity in the payment of taxes and rents.

On the other hand, he never spoke of money from the altar or in the church, unless he was called on to do so in behalf of the diocesan or local charities. What he said in this way was, like all his discourses to the people, well prepared, brief, and to the point. None ever misunderstood him, and none who heard him failed to be the better for it, though he spared no individual if there was question of sin. When the evil had been corrected there remained no thought of it in his mind. His parishioners were satisfied when he gave them a "sound tongue thrashing," for they knew it meant that, the fault having been repaired, they were so much the more in his good graces. It was a joy to them to see him on Sundays in front of the church, after he had said the earlier Mass, talking to the old folk and to the children. They knew he had a kindly eye, especially on the poor. Many a quiet grief, elicited by his scrutiny and questioning in that hour, found its solace and answer without noise or ostentation during the week. Any kind of suffering was the key to his heart and brought him to the home or the bedside of the sick, or to the authorities who could quietly relieve the distress.

The pretty, though modest, church at Doneraile invites devotion. The Canon was most exact in carrying out the liturgical prescriptions, and the great festivals were occasions of joy to all the people. Even the Holy Week services were carried out in that village church as they are in a cathedral. He himself gives us a description of how he conducted the *Tenebrae*. For the ordinary days of Lent there were rosary, sermon and Benediction in the evening, and the people came to attend the services at all times.

We had the office of *Tenebrae* last night here, even here, in this remote village; and we sang the solemn dirges of Jeremias, and my good little choir did harmonize the *Benedictus* and the *Miserere*. It was not quite so impressive, perhaps, as what you have heard,

PARISH CHURCH, DONERAILE

MAIN STREET, DONERAILE

so many times, in the Sistine Chapel; but it was well sustained, and correct, and sure, if our poor people only followed it in their heads and hearts, well, it must have left sweet and soothing, and penitential feelings there.

On Good Friday he writes:

It falls cold, and chill and mournful upon us all! Yesterday was so bright and joyous, we forgot we were in Lent. And the altar was so beautiful, with its red candles (are not candle flames always red in daylight?) and huge masses of flowers — spring flowers, narcissi, and tulips, and hyacinths, and the lily of the valley — all throwing out the incense of their humble hearts before the feet of the hidden Creator. And, all day long, our Children of Mary, in their blue cloaks, divided the hours among them, so that there never was a fear that our dear Lord should be left even for a moment alone. But there was no danger of that! for all day long the people thronged and dwelt in the little church, until very late at night, when, with a kind of pang, as with parting with a beloved one, one by one the candles were extinguished, and the doors closed, and God left alone with His angels! But this morning there was a flash of lights for a moment again which was instantly darkened after the procession of the Blessed Sacrament; and the deep gloom of black drapery, hushed bells, mourning vestments, and the solemn Figure on the cross fell on our hearts and senses.

Then came Holy Saturday and he puts down his thoughts again:

We had Tenebrae again last evening; and, of course, a Passion Sermon. In one sense, the Passion Sermon is the greatest oratorical event of the year in Ireland. Men go to hear the Passion Sermon who won't go to Mass. Protestants always attend. It is *de rigueur*. The priest is chosen for the office as far back as Ash Wednesday; and if he is young, and hasn't yet learned that the breath of popular applause, called Fame, is a very futile and fugitive thing, he is naturally nervous and apprehensive. The lines of the sermon, too, are strictly limited. It must extend to an hour at least. Anything short of that is a disappointment; and it must follow, detail after detail, the Gospel narrative. Any departure from that is viewed with great displeasure by the people, and is gravely censured by the older priests.

"'Twas a good sermon enough; but it was not a Passion Sermon," is the verdict.

If the young priest has physcial endurance to carry him over the two hours, he is immortalised. Everyone feels that real justice has been done to that sacred and ineffable theme. And, dear me! how it touches their Catholic hearts! And how they crowd around that pulpit. Here, just behind me, two or three are leaning over the altar rails; beneath, the children have poked in their heads to get a better view of the "strange priest." The women, with hooded heads, are rocking themselves to and fro, under the magic of the eloquence: now and again, some young girl covertly takes out her handkerchief, and, wiping her eyes hastily, tries to look impassive and unconcerned. Ah, me! 'tis no use. That story of infinite suffering, infinite patience, and infinite love, will continue to touch the human heart until the dread time comes when the selfishness of modern life shall dry up all the springs of human affection, and the divinest examples of self-surrender and abnegation cease to touch the films of eyes that stare blindly and unknowingly at them.

Ah, well! the sermon is over, the Tenebrae concluded; the little children have gone home in the dark clinging to their mothers, and wondering. And Holy Saturday has dawned — the brightest day in the year in my reckoning. For, after all, Easter Sunday is but a second and revised edition of Holy Saturday. Surely, all the joy and exultation of the Resurrection has spent itself, when after the blessing of the font and the Paschal fire (always reminiscent of St. Patrick and Tara), and the mighty candle, and the prophecies and litanies, we flung off our plain albs and purple vestments, and tore away the violet veils from the statues, and the organ peeled out at the Gloria, and the great bell rang, and the acolytes, on tiptoe of expectation, pealed out a salvo of bells at the word! And then that glorious "Regina Coeli," by Lambillotte, is it not? I don't know, and I don't care; nor do I know or care whether it is strictly classical, or Cecilian, or what not. I leave all that to the dreadful people who laugh and cry by rule. All I know is this — that the splendid accompaniment seems to my uncultivated senses to harmonise with all the Rubrical requirements of this great morning. It would not be out of place as the orchestral rendering and resurrection-song of the great final day. Then Magnificat, short Vespers; and Holy Week is over! There is one drawback. The Lenten fast should close on Good Friday

night at twelve o'clock. It is not congruous that after the mighty exultation of the Holy Saturday ceremonies we should have to sit down to a Lenten breakfast.

But on Easter Sunday he carols forth his joy and repents of and retracts what he said above:

Easter Sunday is not a replica, or second edition of anything else on earth. It stands alone. This morning the children got up early to see the sun dancing; for in Ireland the sun dances with joy on the Resurrection-morning. And all the neighbors, thronging to Mass, are joyful; and "A happy Aisther!" is going all round. We had an immense Communion; and at High Mass an immense congregation.

"'Twas aiqual to any two Masses I ever heard before," says a farmer from a neighbouring parish, who saw High Mass for the first time. And the "Victimae Paschali" was lovely; and again my heart leaped at the "Regina Coeli"; and I thought I heard all Heaven tumultuously echoing that mighty paean of triumph to their great Queen. And the boys bolted at the Alleluias of the Ite Missa Est, as is usual all the world over. But they made up for it. For here, under my window, all the week, they are shouting Alleluia! whenever they peg a top or hit a marble; and all nature is singing Alleluia! for it is springtime, and the green buds are hanging on the trees, just ready to burst forth; and the incense that hangs around the garments of the virgin season is afloat in the air; and the river, there under the bridge, is murmuring Alleluia! and the red-beaked blackbirds and the speckled thrushes are shouting Alleluia! And the noisy larks are filling the heavens with Alleluia! and, oh, dear me, all Ireland would ring with Alleluia! from sea to sea, and from cliff to cliff: but alas! it is as yet only a feeble prelude, for her resurrection-day has not dawned; and no one has yet arisen to answer the mournful question:

"Who will roll back for us the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre? For it is very great!"

He had a reverent and abiding devotion to our Blessed Lady. "Mary is the Mother of God and our Mother — the solitary boast and only perfection of our fallen nature; woman, yet more than angel; human, yet raised to a perfection it is not given to any other creature to attain; created and finite, but in the world of grace omnipotent — such

is Mary, and as such do we reverence her, mingling our reverence with our tenderest affection and unfailing confidence." She was the model which he would have the maidens of Ireland pattern after. To her image he recurred at all times in his sermons and instructions; as is manifest from his volume *Mariae Corona*. Indeed in a manner he dedicated all his work for the honor of God through the Immaculate Virgin Queen. The *Sedes Saptientiae* was the source of many of his best inspirations. He would frequently arrange that the completion of a work, a book written by him, should coincide with some feast day of Our Lady: "I want this to be a feast day gift for her," he would say.

Animated with such sentiments, it was his constant endeavor to render the offices of the Church attractive and devotional; and it is marvelous how well he succeeded in eliciting the coöperation of the people toward making the life of the Church the guiding motive of their aspirations and actions.

The Canon, although not a trained musician, readily discriminated between what was really devotional and worthy of God's service in church music and the vulgar varieties of popular tunes and sentimental melodies that are often heard in church choirs. He himself composed some admirable and easily interpreted hymns in honor of the Sacred Heart and of Our Blessed Lady. Some of these have found a larger circle since, and are being sung by the children in many parishes not only in Ireland, but also in America and Australia.

The parish choir of Doneraile was reputed to be one of the best town choirs in the South of Ireland. Every Christmas the Canon gave the members a royal supper at which he himself presided. The entertainment was followed by music, singing, and homely dancing. Whilst the pastor, who had an agreeable voice, rarely sang at social gatherings, he never failed to contribute his share of the mirth by singing at his choir party. Among his favorite songs for these occasions were "The Irish Brigade," "The

West's Asleep," "A Nation Once Again," "Who Fears to Speak of 'Ninety-Eight'?" etc. At the last gathering of this kind he was too ill to sing; but in place of the expected song he told a story — or, what seemed to those who heard him, an allegory. The priests who were present recognized that he made a review of his life among his people, though in the third person. They say that it seemed "the most beautiful thing that had ever come from his tongue or pen."

Quite in harmony with his care of the divine services was his eagerness for the outward beauty of the house of God and everything connected with it. Cleanliness and good taste were everywhere and always maintained. The altar, the statues, the decorations, all received his minute and reverent attention. It was his particular pleasure to have the interior, paintings and frescoes, constantly renovated, to keep them fresh and beautiful. And all this he did for the most part at his own expense, when his writings brought him a fair income.

Reference has already been made to the "Stations," that is the outlying villages visited periodically by the Canon to supplement his missionary work for those who found it difficult or impossible to come to the parish church. There is an entry in one of his notebooks, and given in *Under the Cedars and the Stars*, in which he speaks of a young cleric who was anxious to do missionary work. "He intended leaving Ireland and going abroad. It didn't matter where. He wanted work, and arduous work, and difficulties and trials. Otherwise he could never find his manhood. Missionary life in Ireland is merely running a knife through a cheese. You couldn't call that work — could you now?" said the young seminarist.

But the Canon found his work absorbing enough; although it had its compensations of restfulness, as he tells us.

> It is no joke to get up at an unearthly hour in the morning, and to speed, in very variable weather, seven or eight miles to the house where the Station is to be held. Sometimes, after snow, the ground is so slippery we have to pick our steps. Sometimes Boreas thunders from the north, out between the mountain

chasms, and across the bleak March landscape. Sometimes the South wind comes up, with its soft, sweet, heavy burden of rain. But at all times one is glad to get in sight of the farmer's cottage, known and recognised afar off by its fresh coat of whitewash, and the little group of men waiting in the haggart before the door. There is a cheery welcome from the master — the husband or the eldest son; a careful picking of our footsteps across the muddy yard, carpeted with fresh straw; a bark of warning from the vigilant collie; a still more warm welcome from the vanithee, and then we settle down to work.

Frequently, where there are several priests, one of them accompanies the pastor. They hear the confessions of the people; next there is an instruction, and then follows Mass at which those who attend go to Holy Communion. It is all done in homely fashion in the farmer's house and the people gather round about as best they can to get near the priest.

I generally leave the "parlor" to my curate. I prefer the seat by the open hearth, where piles of timber and coal, and occasionally a heap of mountain turf, light and heat the whole kitchen. And here is the "sugan" chair, made of twisted hay; but the vanithee rushes out with a grand, new, horse-haired, well-springed one, and snatches the humble seat swiftly away. Right opposite me, a withered, venerable woman stoops to catch a little heat for her poor congealed veins. Her beads hang down as they roll through her fingers. Here, quite close, are the three junior scions of the house, their faces shining from soap and the fire, their pinafores spotless, and with great wonder in their eyes at the awful apparition of the priest. Silently and reverently, one by one, the penitents come and kneel on the hard paving stones, bend their heads till their hair touches your face, and make their simple confession. Then the little lecture, the Holy Mass, heard so reverently and humbly. All is still as death, save the cackling of a hen in the yard, or the swift carol of a blackbird out on the ash tree beyond. The station list is called; the "pleasant word" is said; and then the breakfast. It is a pretty poor business in Lent, though since we got the dispensation for butter it is not quite so bad. And the vanithee, with great pity for the young priests, sidles over and whispers:

"Wisha, yer reverence, what about a couple of eggs? It is a long drive and a cowld morning."

We shake our heads; and the talk goes round, with one or two of the neighbors who have come in to help us; and it is all about the 'Lague,' or the landlord, or the new taxes, or the Land Courts. And it is sad and almost desperate to see these poor people toiling from dawn to dark to make the "rint"; but "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and there is a perennial fountain of hope in the hearts of these people. "Well, sure God is good!" There is the ultimate syllable on the Irish tongue — faith, deep, profound, unshakable in the eternal clemency and protection of God.

And so, cheerful enough after our cup of tea, we bid "Good-bye!" to our good hosts, until —

"Give Mary your blessin', your reverence; she's goin' to America next week."

My heart sinks down into my boots. America! America! draining the life-blood of Ireland. All that is fair, and beautiful and healthy going; and all that is old, and decrepit and imbecile left behind. I cannot help saying angrily: —

"Why can't she stop at home?"

"Wisha, yer reverence, what's there for her? We have enough to do; and sure the sisters in Boston have paid her passage, and will meet her whin landin'."

There is no use replying. With a bad grace I place my hand on the thick auburn hair of the poor child; and my curate wonders all the way home why I am so silent and distracted. I cannot help it. This whole modern and universal exodus from their native land is maddening.

These visits gave him opportunities for observation, and much of his writing bears the impress of what he saw and heard on such occasions among the people. In a letter to Father Russell he indicates how much it gratified him to be out on these excursions.

DONERAILE, CO. CORK.
March 10.

DEAR FATHER RUSSELL,

. . . I am out at the Country Station every morning. It is trying, particularly when the roads are dangerous from frost; but I wouldn't miss them for anything. It is just such a pleasure to meet the people in their own homes.

Would there be any hope of realizing my foolish dream of creating a few well-read and cultivated circles in Ireland? I cannot bear to think that all our power is running to weed in angry political strife with so much personal acrimony. I am always dreaming of an Irish youth, silent, modest, reserved, reading much and talking little; and trying to bring into daily life some of the graces of civilisation. . .

What grieved him was to find that the young people everywhere were anxious to emigrate. He did everything to open prospects for the boys and girls that might induce them to remain at home; although at other times he felt that this wholesale exodus was providential, that it was in harmony with the genius of the race, and that it would be useless to try to stem the outflow. In this spirit he writes:

I know it is the genius of the race. We were always exiles and wanderers. We got the evil impetus from our Scythian forefathers, who struck and pitched their tents of skins from the Balkans to the Urals, and from the Danube to the Ganges. It was the same nomadic spirit that drove Dathi and his soldiers across Europe in their terrible crusade of fire, until their mighty king was smitten, from Heaven, under the snows of the Alps. It was the same spirit that bade Brendan seek the Western World; and his companions the forests of France and Germany. Down there on the Kerry coast, near Smerwick, where Grey de Wilton massacred the four hundred Spaniards who laid down their arms, depending on his word of honor, you still may see the beehive cells where the ancient Irish monks rested on their couches of rushes — cells so constructed for this race of mighty ascetics that the monk could neither sit, stand, nor lie. And there is the same eternal sea, where they found their choir-stalls, for there up to their armpits in the freezing waters they stood at midnight, and sent up their penitential chaunts to Heaven with no organ accompaniment but that of howling winds and thundering waves. But were these ascetics of the Irish Thebaid content with this? No! After thirty or forty years of this violence to Heaven, the old Celtic spirit seized them, and "*peregrinari pro Christo*" on their lips, up they arose, and on these frail coracles, such as those you may still see in Kerry and Arran — poor, fragile, Nautilus-boats, canvas stretched on a few planks, they went forth to France and Germany;

and the weaker races shuddered before their Libyan austerities, and clamoured for the milder rule of Benedict in place of the awful penalism of these Irish Culdees. And that is the reason, you know, why the Benedictines have never thriven in Ireland. Well! "peregrinari! peregrinari!" there is still the destiny of the race. Alas! that we should say it: It is no longer "peregrinari pro Christo!" but "peregrinari pro Mammona!" Ah! yes! the dear old Spartan simplicity of Irish peasant life is yielding to the seductions of the Zeitgeist: we want the city, and the electric light, and the saloon, and the ball-room. There's the secret of Irish emigration!

There is among the occasional musical compositions which he attempted from time to time, some of them devotional, and others intended for popular use, one that shows how he sought to counteract the allurements from abroad. It is in the form of a dialogue and suggests the disappointment that awaits the emigrant in the New World.

THE EMIGRANT'S RETURN

I

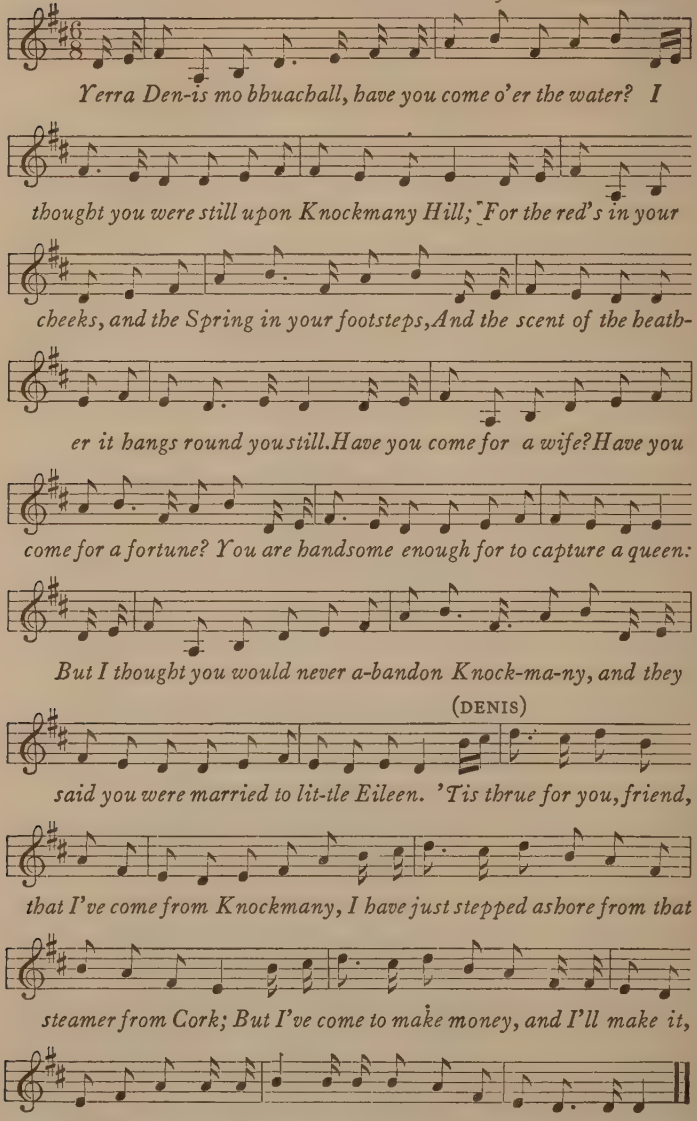
Yerra Denis, me bhuachall, have you come o'er the water?
I thought you were still upon Knockmany Hill;
For the red's in your cheeks, and the spring in your footsteps,
For the scent of the heather it hangs round you still.
Have you come for a wife? Have you come for a fortune?
You are handsome enough for to capture a queen!
But I thought you would never abandon Knockmany,
And they said you would marry that little Eileen.

DENIS

'Tis true for you, friend, that I've come from Knockmany,
I have just left behind me that steamer from Cork.
But I've come to make money; and I'll make it, my honey,
If there's gold to be found on the streets of New York.

THE EMIGRANT'S RETURN

Words and Music by CANON SHEEHAN.


Yerra Den-is mo bhuachall, have you come o'er the water? I
thought you were still upon Knockmany Hill; For the red's in your
cheeks, and the Spring in your footsteps, And the scent of the heath-
er it hangs round you still. Have you come for a wife? Have you
come for a fortune? You are handsome enough for to capture a queen:
But I thought you would never a-bandon Knock-ma-ny, and they
(DENIS)
said you were married to lit-tle Eileen. 'Tis thrue for you, friend,
that I've come from Knockmany, I have just stepped ashore from that
steamer from Cork; But I've come to make money, and I'll make it,
my honey, if there's gold to be found on the streets of New York.

II

And you're sure to succeed. — But you'll pardon my longing
To hear of the land that I left long ago;
Are the mountains still there with their peaks in the heavens,
And their colours that glint in the sun and the snow?
How's the old purple heather, where the hares lay in hiding?
Is the gorse still blooming on the meadows all white,
Where we heard in the clover the wild bees ahumming
And the daisies and buttercups smiled on us bright?

DENIS

Well, there isn't much change; but the people are going;
And I had no notion of stopping in Cork;
So I've come to make money; and I'll make it, my honey,
If there's gold to be found in the streets of New York.

III

Are the waters still running where we sat in the sunlight
When the evening was breaking o'er mountain and dale,
And the salmon were hiding away from the shallows,
And the dew was falling on hillside and vale?
Do the blackbirds still sing in the groves in the morning?
Do the thrushes trill out as they nest in the wood?
Do the robins still peck for the crumbs in the doorway?
Do the swallows skim over the rivers in flood?

DENIS

Yerra lave me alone wid yere questions and answers;
I left them behind when I started from Cork.
For I've come to make money; and I'll make it, my honey,
If there's gold to be found on the streets of New York.

IV

Is there frost on the fields? Is there snow in the hollows?
Is th' air crisp, as of old, in the valleys below?
Are there riders in pink on their lusty horses?
And the hounds baying loud to the: Hark — Tally-Ho!

And over the furrows, and over the fences,
Do the horsemen still plunge when the hounds have the scent?
When the farmers forget, in the glee of the moment,
That to-morrow the agent will press them for rent?

DENIS

Yerra — what do I know about huntin' and sportin'?
You've put lead in me heart that was light as a cork;
For I've come to make money; and I'll make it, my honey,
If there's gold to be found on the streets of New York.

V

And the young Irish lads — are they roguish as ever?
Are the dear little colleens as sweet as of yore?
Do the old people talk by the fire in the evening?
Is there bacon and praties and potheen galore
To regale the good neighbour that comes in the gloaming,
And the Irishman's friend who we know will not fail?
Do they sing the old songs with the lilt and the music?
And the sadness so sweet in the tongue of the Gael?

DENIS

Yerra, what do I care about music and dancin',
Though they say that my steps were as light as a cork?
Sure I've come to make money; and I'll make it, my honey,
If there's gold to be found on the streets of New York.

VI

And 'tis Sunday; and hark — there's the Mass-bell atolling,
And the people are strolling in twos and in threes
To the little ould chapel far down in the valley,
And the little bell tower peeping out of the trees.
And the priest — he is late; for he talks with the neighbours,
There's no hurry nor haste on the holy old sod.
And the dead they are sleeping; no need of us weeping;
For are they not safe in the bosom of God?

DENIS

Will you shtop that cadraulin; will you shtop that cnofshaulin' —
Oh it is just what you'd hear on the streets of ould Cork.
But I've come to make money; and I reckon, my honey,
I'll pick it up in the streets of New York.

VII

Do they dance as of yore, when twilight is falling,
And the night breezes softly steal over the lea;
And the red moon is climbing behind the dark shieling,
And the scent of the sea weed creeps up from the sea?
And the skirl of the pipes; and the scream of the fiddle,
And the patter of brogues on the ould barn floor
And Shemus and Eileen fornint to each other,
With their hearts as light as their feet on the floor?

DENIS

Yerra — T'ainim a Dia, man, you are drivin' me crazy —
To the divil wid you and the shtreets of New York!
Keep your dirty ould money; for I promise, me honey,
I'll go back with the steamer that lands me in Cork.

VII

RELATIONSHIP TO PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS

THE consideration which Canon Sheehan showed to his people was not withheld from those with whom he lived and labored. He went to great pains to keep the burden of the work off his curates. On Sundays he was invariably on hand to relieve the priest who said the late Mass whenever there were baptisms to administer for those who came from a distance. He had great tenderness in all that concerned the children. It was curious to see him on cold winter mornings trying the baptismal font, and bidding the chapel-woman to get some warm water for the infants who were to be christened.

While his age, delicate health, and the consideration due to him as pastor entitled him to certain exemptions from the more arduous service of the ministry, he never thought of availing himself of these privileges. He knew, of course, that the people loved him, though his native modesty led him to underestimate the affection with which they clung to him. In the pulpit, in the confessional, on sick calls and at their recreations, the young as well as the old looked for "Father Pat," if he could only "be got at."

There was hardly any need of what is known as a "mission" in the parish, so long as the Canon was in active service. The people knew their duties and those who could be reached did their best to fulfil them, even if it were but to please their big-hearted pastor. Nevertheless he thought it necessary on occasion to invite a strange priest to hold a "retreat" for the parish. The last time a spiritual revival of this kind was held was in Lent of 1912. The Canon had asked his friend, Father Phelan, S.J., to come for a week. Although he was under the stress of sickness at the time, the pastor took part in all the exercises and spent himself

freely in the confessional. One of the priests tells how an old parishioner remarked: "These missioners may as well stay at home as be thrying to bate the Canon in the confessional, or at the praching aither; he is the best of the lot of them." He was somewhat scrupulous, and rather dreaded hearing people's confessions, especially the children's, on account of the responsibility which he felt it entailed in seeing that they were properly disposed. But the little ones who were to make their first confession instinctively sought him and said they wanted to tell everything to "Father Pat."

Whilst to strangers Canon Sheehan may have appeared distant and aloof, those who came in close contact with him, particularly among the clergy, knew him for a true "Daddy Dan." It was his principle to bend with every bend of fitful, crooked human nature and to endeavor to sound every cavity in the heart of it, so as to make, by gentle, humble yielding, a union between religion and the individual soul.

The secret of the Canon's influence with the clergy lay in his personal reverence for the sacerdotal calling. He not only treated priests with the utmost courtesy, but he was most sensitive about their personal reputation. Indeed the two cardinal convictions on which he was fond of dwelling were the dignity of the priest and the sanctity of women in Ireland. He summarized vocation to the priesthood as the possession of "the virtue of loving men, and the talent of making them know it." That talent was held to be of the highest value. It had nothing to do with learning or culture or external accomplishments, though it might exist with these gifts and be enhanced by them. Among numerous specimens of typical priests whom he has pictured for us — some lovable and gentle and humble, others austere and unyielding in their stern commands to bend to God's law — there is none whose efficiency in the work of souls he does not gauge by the single power to enter into the weaknesses of human nature and to stoop to them in true Christlike sympathy.

Of his old companions-in-arms among the diocesan clergy he saw something occasionally at their ecclesiastical conferences. Though usually silent he was in no wise formal at such meetings. More cordial were the glimpses which old classmates got of him when they met at Kilkee or similar resorts whither the Canon would at times go for a rest. But whether he saw his old friends or not, he kept himself informed concerning their wellbeing, and, if able, he visited them in illness. Even when quite near his own end, we find him writing to Father Edmund Morton, who had been associated with him as curate at Mallow, later parish priest at Ballyhea:

Although the Psalmist says that after seventy years there is nothing but "labor et dolor" I regret to say that you and I are anticipating sadly. I am hustling along in the teeth of many troubles, trying to get in as much work as I can before the night falls. Send me a card to say that you are all right again.

Ever sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN, P.P.

With a high regard for his brother priests generally, he especially admired the intelligent zeal and the ambitions of the younger clergy to lift themselves out of the groove of tradition. It was this admiration and his desire to see the same spirit take hold and spread as wide as possible that caused him to present those contrasts of Irish clerical life which some have misinterpreted as a desire to find fault. If there was anything like criticism in his presentation of his characters, it proceeded from the high regard he had for the cloth, and from the realization of the tremendous power which the priests of Ireland possessed to change the untoward circumstances of the time into blessings for the people. With no lack of respect he ventured to say:

The Catholic priesthood knows not its power. If it did, all forms of error would go down before it. The consecrated force of so many thousand intellects, the pick and choice of each nation under heaven, the very flower of civilization, emancipated too from all domestic cares, and free to pursue in the domains of

thought that subject for which each has the greatest aptitude, should bear down with its energy and impetuosity the tottering fabrics of human ingenuity or folly.

Here as in most other places are hundreds who, freed from the drudgery of great cities, the mechanical grinding of daily and uninspiring work, are at liberty to devote themselves to any or every branch of literature or science. They resemble nothing so much as the outpost sentinels posted on far steppes on the outskirts of civilization, with no urgent duty except to keep watch and ward over tranquil because unpeopled wastes; and to answer now and again from the guard on its rounds, the eternal question: What of the night, watchman? Watchman, what of the night?

In a spirit of wistful sadness he recalls the days of his ancestors, when Irish priests were also the champions of universal learning; and he quotes the often bitterly hostile Protestant writer, Mosheim, as a witness: "These Irish were lovers of learning, and distinguished themselves in these times of ignorance by the culture of the sciences beyond all the European nations; the first teachers of the scholastic philosophy in Europe, and who so early as the eighth century illustrated the doctrines of religion by the principles of philosophy."

He appreciated of course the esteem of his superiors as well as of his confrères. From his Bishop comes the willing testimony that the reserved pastor of Doneraile maintained a reverently humble attitude at all times in his intercourse with the clergy of his diocese, whilst he did not expect and much less court the reward of popularity or place. He meant to be useful on earth, and his compensation would, he knew, surely come where it could not any more be belittled by vanity on his own part or by envy on the part of others. Hence he sincerely put aside all overtures at advancement to what might be considered a benefice with increased responsibility. "It is my prayer and earnest wish," he wrote to a dear friend, "to lay my bones in Doneraile, among the people whom I have served."

Although he had always championed a cultured clergy and held that learning was the hallmark which had distin-

guished Ireland's priests in the past, there were other qualities which he deemed of greater value in the pastoral ministry.

The dignity of the Church is derived, not so much from the erudition of her sons, or the wonder-working labours of her apostles in the domain of science and art and literature, as from the manner in which she has stooped down and addressed herself to meeting the more vulgar wants of humanity. Yes, there is a Christian realism as well as a Christian idealism; a realism that comes down from the loftiest realms of speculative thought to the deepest abysses of human infirmity; a realism that searches with no profane curiosity into hidden places, but only seeks them to enlighten them; a realism that lays bare the wounds of humanity to heal them, the sins of humanity to forgive them, the wants of humanity to relieve them. Guided everywhere by the divine spirit of charity, it consults for the sinful and the leprous. In its cabinets its thinkers frame subtle laws for its guidance, and stoop from the highest altitudes of thought to consider and define the relations of a hind to his master, and what little wrong to the helpless may debar from the kingdom of heaven. Nothing escapes its vigilance. However hidden under dreary platitudes, it detects error and condemns it; and it surrounds with inexorable and iron legislation its sacred things and its most sacred interests — the safety of souls.

It is from these considerations of the wondrous work done in the Catholic Church, through her sacramental ministry, and especially in the confessional, that he drew his convictions regarding the love which the Irish people bears toward their priests. And he appeals to them in touching words:

You priests of Ireland! When will your prophet arise to tell you what an ocean of faith, and love, and adoration flows softly and silently, without break or murmur, around the little islets of your existence? If we except the love of a mother for her child, earth has no love so pure, so tender, so spiritual as the love of the Irish people for their priests. — And yet, what a gulf, yawning and impassable, is between them! No matter how close the ties of affection may be, the priest moves through his people, amongst them, but not of them! Consecrated by solemn oaths, dedicated to high and sacred purposes, the living impersonation

of principles and ideas that could never have dawned upon the human mind, had they not been revealed, he walks his solitary way through life, bending, like some sublime and pitying spirit, to the weakness and wants of humanity.

He had, as has been said, disposed of the main income from his books for the benefit of the aged and sick priests of his diocese, and the fund thus created had been placed in the care of a body of trustees. When he himself was eventually obliged to go to the hospital for treatment, he would not draw upon this fund, despite the urging of the Bishop. He insisted that the salary he received from the parish, of which he was still pastor, because the Bishop, knowing the wishes of the people, refused to relieve him, would be quite sufficient to defray his expenses, and that he did not expect to need much extra attention at the Infirmary.

Averse as he was to mere social visiting, he was most anxious to have those of a congenial mind enjoy his hospitality. His correspondence amply shows this. Whether friend or stranger knocked at his door, Father Sheehan was invariably the courteous and considerate host and entertained his guests in a generous and charming manner calculated to leave an impression on the heart's memory. He was especially fond of conversing with men of intellectual and spiritual habits, and most of these found in him not simply an appreciative hearer, but one who might be looked upon as a teacher in the ascetical science. Withal he had a thoroughly practical insight into actual conditions and the discernment to make his views on spiritual subjects equally stimulating and edifying.

"How shall I thank you," writes the Dominican Father Vincent McNabb, "for the extreme graciousness of your invitation? As I shall be at Limerick in the autumn, I shall look upon it as a privilege to spend the night under your roof." Similar were his relations with the religious of Dublin and elsewhere, especially the Capuchin Fathers and the Sons of St. Ignatius. To his friend Father George O'Neill, S.J., he writes:

Aug. 24, 1904.

DEAR FR. O'NEILL,

I assure you it was an unqualified disappointment to us that we had no opportunity of seeing you here during your sojourn in our neighborhood. I say "us" because the Nuns would have liked very much to see you; and that Profession Ceremony and Dejeuner, which seemed so formidable to you, was a very informal and undress affair, which you would have enjoyed immensely.

To myself personally, a visit would have been one of the Temporal Works of Mercy. If I could have pinned you down to a seat in my garden, and in the most secluded corner thereof, and let you talk at me for a couple of hours, it would have brightened existence very much for me. For you cannot conceive how much I feel the loss of some intercommunication of ideas with those who, like yourself, could bring into a secluded and solitary life some of the ideas that are stirring the world outside. You do not feel the need of these stimulants, because you are every day meeting men who can talk your own language; but to me an hour's conversation on those subjects that interest me would be a pleasure akin to that of hearing one's mother-tongue in a foreign country. See what you deprived me of. And worst of all, you went away hungry and footsore from our door. And a Dives' banquet at the convent.

I am pleased to have the correct edition of St. Teresa's bookmark in your lines. I had always a suspicion that there was something lacking; but I took my own as the orthodox version.

The reason I like Shelley so much is that he seems to me the most spiritual English poet; and he also seems to me to be the one poet who has shaped his language to his thought, and not his thought to his language. Rhythm seemed to come at the back of thought; whereas in Tennyson and others the rhyme seemed to be framed first, and the thought called upon to fill in the spaces.

It cost me an effort to write as I did about Keats whom I like so much. I feel that I was disloyal to a friend.

I would send you my last book, if I thought it worthy of your acceptance. The reviews seem to make the mistake of regarding it as an attempt to create a masterpiece, instead of regarding it as a *jeu d'échecs* written off to help a charity. I was unfortunate in the title. My own title was *The Fate of Atropos;* but the Nuns asked me, under the inspiration of a priest, to change to the present title. The 2nd scene *After the Carnival*, which Fr. Russell

thinks unreal, is a *verbatim* report of a conversation between three young ladies overheard in a carriage between Cork and Queenstown.

I am, dear Fr. O'Neill,
Your sincere
P. A. SHEEHAN.

RELATIONS TO THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AND TO THE NUNS OF THE PRESENTATION CONVENT

It had been one of the Canon's most anxious cares, as it was one of his greatest consolations, to safeguard the spiritual as well as the temporal interests of the religious who had aided him in the training of the children of his parish. These helpmates were devoted to him. The spiritual conferences which he gave them periodically were such as they could not easily forget. It was not simply his beautiful diction, but much more his burning sincerity and piety which reached their inmost hearts. His reverence for the religious state was of the same order as that which he had for the sacred character of the priesthood. He has left us a picture of his conception of the life of a religious in one of the chapters of his *Triumph of Failure*. He describes in some detail how there comes to the soul of the young girl, often in the very midst of the music and enjoyment of worldly pleasures, a strange and wondrous attraction that causes her to turn away from the glamour of the gay society that seeks to envelop the soul with roseate dreams of earthly love and to draw it with whisperings of subtle flattery. In answer she offers her fresh young life to Christ in the retirement and renunciation of the cloister. "It is not weariness, or disgust or disappointment; but in the whirl of the dance she sees a crucified Figure, and in the whispers of love she hears some far-off voice that touches and thrills her; and she stands out at once from the crowd, without reluctance, without doubt. She has seen the nod of the Bridegroom's head, the beck of the Bridegroom's hand."

He knew that a great deal of hidden talent as well as virtue was enshrined within the convent walls; but it was sacred

there because enlisted in the service of God, instead of drawing the vain applause of the world outside.

Why there is more talent, nay genius, locked up in our Irish convents than would suffice to create a new civilization. There are women there who could sing as bravely as any woman from Sappho to Elizabeth Barrett Browning; but they are mute — except to God. There are artists there that could create a new school, as the ragged followers of St. Francis created the Umbrian school, but they paint Agnus Deis for little children, and scapulars for beggar women. There are girls with trained voices who would be smothered with bouquets if they appeared on any stage from London to Naples, and they sing only to God. For Him they compose, for Him they paint, for Him they sing; they have no ambition but to please Him, no consolation but to be near Him, no hope but to sit at His feet forever. Oh it is wonderful, especially to me who was never brought up at a convent school, this army of noble women, passing by in disdain all that the world holds dear, and conquered by the love of Jesus Christ.

He carefully fostered religious vocations and he had a keen discernment in this regard. Where others superficially saw in the romping ways and untamed spirit of the young but a love of independence and worldly amusement, he discovered "the deeper wells of the heart's capacities that would some day drain into themselves and absorb all the superficial tributaries of the sounding and rushing waters." And indeed religious life to him did not mean a withdrawal from joy. On the contrary it meant a sanctifying of all that is human. The mirth and minstrelsy of community life in a convent were to him the surest sign of a sane spiritual life. The convent recreation room is the abode of gladness, and there he would find music and innocent humor, a sympathy begotten of that affectionate reverence with which the Catholic heart regards the priest. To the aged nun he is as a son who has attained princely rank; to the young members of the community he is the father, by which affectionate title all smilingly welcome him.

When any of the nuns were ill he saw to it that they had the best medical aid, over and beyond that which the

maternal solicitude and efficiency of the superior and sisters provided for the members of the community. Whilst for himself he wished no special nursing or private hospital treatment when ill, he was most anxious that invalids of the convent should have the benefit of the first medical advisers. His letters to the nuns attest his constant solicitude for everything that concerned their temporal as well as spiritual welfare. Among the mass and variety of his correspondence, touching this phase of his solicitude I find this:

DONERAILE, 25 *May*, 1896.

DEAR SISTER,

We have been reading all your letters with avidity. To-day we are very anxious about Sister E. I fear it will be a very critical operation, and we shall be watching for your telegram. I am so glad now that you went with them. It was clearly indispensable. Poor Sister A. We all have the deepest feeling, and there is much sadness in the Community. *Fiat Voluntas Dei!* I think all the papers are now signed. Sister P. is very clear-headed on the matter and I think my part of the work is done. I would advise postponing the question of the gas until later on. When you come back (next week, I hope) we must attack the school question seriously. All are well, D. G., but hurry back. The nuns are all so good, so sympathetic, so affectionate, so anxious. They are beyond all praise.

P. A. S.

CASUAL VISITORS

With strangers he was uniformly courteous. For many years after his fame had gone abroad, he was besieged by tourists, mostly visitors from America who had read *My New Curate*, and wished to see its author. To these he would talk of himself because that was what they wanted to take home with them. He would conduct them into his modest garden, where under the cedars he had his little table, and tell them how he wrote. Some, ungraciously and lacking power of interpretation, took this for the author's vanity. They knew not how reticent Canon Sheehan was about himself and how little he revealed of his inner self even to those who were in the best position, from

daily association, to know his privacies and catch his shortcomings. He rather enjoyed these inroads upon his seclusion inasmuch as they pleased others and gave him an opportunity of studying traits and dispositions which were somewhat new to him. Later on, especially during the closing months of his life, when he was never free from pain, he was less anxious to have visits from those who through promptings of mere curiosity wished to meet the famous author. Nevertheless, he would receive with the utmost urbanity, and, as far as possible, with cordiality, those who seemed anxious to converse with him. On these occasions the Canon could be easily interested so as seemingly to forget the poor state of his health. An educator of some distinction who withholds his name from publication called upon him the year before his death, and has left his impression in the following sketch:

I met Canon Sheehan once only. I had driven out from Mallow to Doneraile on a gray wet day in September, and when I went to his house the dark was already down. When we (for a friend introduced me) were shown into a neat conventional sitting-room I was more than a little depressed and uneasy. For, above all things, I feared that the Canon might suspect me of being out for curiosity or mere "copy" in his house. And so, when we were ushered, a few minutes later, into the Study, and he stood, somewhat coldly, I thought, and sadly, to welcome us, my worst fears seemed to be realized. Everything appeared in order in the room, books stately piled, and altogether there seemed to me an air of English dignity about the place. When the Canon, sitting by his desk, asked me, still, as I thought, with a kind of Victorian stiffness, whether I would take "some wine or a little coffee", I was quite disturbed by the slow accuracy with which he spoke, and in my embarrassment, became excited and began to talk away freely on my own lines. As soon as my friend who had introduced me saw this he got up and left me alone with the Canon, and in a few minutes more the whole atmosphere was changed. For I began to see that my host wanted to hear me and my story, and that, empty almost of vanity, he had only the remotest pleasure in talking about himself. In the hour or so we conversed on poetry, the younger writers of Munster, the Canon's methods of literary

composition, the status of the lay teacher in Irish Secondary Schools, the recurrence of drink and drugs in the history of poets, the Music Hall audiences at Cork, and a dozen other subjects; Canon Sheehan intensely interested in them all. When I told him I would like to settle in Ireland as a Higher Grade Teacher if only I secured a respectable salary, he shrugged his shoulders and said — "They pay the doctors well because they are trying to 'save things already in decay, but the Teacher who is given the care of the very beginnings of beauty is paid no more than the police-sergeant who watches the public-house."

Canon Sheehan considered the teacher next in importance to the priest in guiding the minds of the young, and hoped that in the new Ireland the teacher would be a man who would be paid adequately for the very serious and important work he was doing. He thought that the national teachers were not treated as they ought to be by their Commissioners, that they were not raised up to the plane they should occupy among people; and this want of consideration, and the miserable stipend given to them, tended to lower their position and influence.

Turning to his books I asked him what method of writing he followed. "None at all," he replied. "I just go walking of an evening out the road, my brain is suddenly stimulated, and I come back home to work on one or two or three stories or articles that I am writing." "You do not believe in a regular writing-day?" "No. It would be impossible for me." On poetry the Canon grew eloquent and read with real enthusiasm from Joaquin Miller and from some work of his own. The picture of him there by his desk, on that wild night in a forlorn Irish town, reading poetry to me is altogether an unforgettable one. For it was the older man who now had thrown off the mask and was a flame of enthusiasm, while I, grown calm by contrast, watched his burning cheeks, his flashing eyes, and caught the quaver in his voice that told me better than all else how rapt he was at his own utterance.

I felt, at once, how fine a leader he would have been for the younger school of writers in Munster whom he longed to meet, and whose rise he watched with a tremendous interest. He asked me particularly about T. C. Murray, the dramatist, and Daniel Corkery, the leader of the literary revival at Cork. It was plain that he was anxious to meet both men, but the modesty bred of restricted environment kept them apart. . . .

When I got up to leave after my one and a half hour's stay it

was with a feeling of real regret. The Canon's earlier sad and seeming conventional air had vanished away, and the tender wistful child and father in him lingered in his hand-shake and shone from his lingering eyes. I did not know then that, already given up by Dublin specialists, his death was long overdue. How heroic he was, and how saintly, thus marked for doom, to smile and sing and say no word of his suffering to a rash-judging fool such as I! . . . I am not likely, in my day, ever to forget him. Even now, writing this in a nook of beauty by the shore of Lake Geneva, I seem to lose reality and to see him spirit-like fading out through a field of flowers, but turning ever to look for his friends on the barren plains with such a pleading in his eyes as fills me with a strange urgency of my own call to the Land of Heart's Desire.

PART IV

THE END

I

FOREBODINGS

IN September of 1910 Canon Sheehan went to Dublin to consult Sir Charles Ball, the eminent surgeon. On the 8th of that month, the feast of the Nativity of Our Blessed Lady, he heard his death warrant. "He received it," writes a friend, the only one to whom, besides his brother, he told the object and result of his visit to Dublin, "as joyously as if it had been an assurance of his perfect cure." He had insisted on being told not only the exact state of his illness, but the complications which might set in. As he had a high sense of the moral obligation which forbids the unnecessary use of anaesthetics to relieve pain he did not want to be unprepared for what might come. The surgeon put the gravity of his case before him; and left him in no doubt as to the details, which were such as might have unnerved the strongest nature. He took a brave view of things and accepted the verdict of the medical judge with a sense of contentment for which, he himself said, he was deeply grateful to God. No one would, on his return to his parish, have suspected what had been revealed to him by the physician, on whom he had moreover imposed strict secrecy. His cheerfulness and unbroken devotion to his duties as pastor disarmed suspicion of his suffering among those who loved him as a father.

He made no changes in his daily routine during the following year. Toward the summer of 1912 it became evident to those who conversed with him that he was suffering, almost continually, acute pain. His regular physician intimated that there were grave symptoms of impending danger which demanded that he should observe the utmost

care. The report speedily gained currency that the Canon was seriously ill; it was quietly said among his friends that he could not live through the winter. When the fact of his appearing rarely in public gave support to these rumors, the people became alarmed. The entire village took on the air of anxious solicitude. The church bells were hushed for fear of disturbing "Father Pat," and the same kind considerateness was observed even by the Protestants of the district. For fully six weeks the people went to church without the accustomed invitation from the local belfries. The road that ran to his house was covered with tan bark lest the noise of passing vehicles should disturb the patient, and the little children, as they passed the presbytery on tiptoe, constituted themselves mentors for the older folk so as to guard against any possible disturbance of their sick pastor.

His doctor, who was greatly devoted to him, held out a ray of hope, provided the patient were placed in an infirmary where skillful and constant attendance could be given him. When this was mentioned to the Canon he begged to be left undisturbed. He had been quite cheerful all through the agony around him, and had seemed to prepare for death with a pleasant matter-of-fact disposition, which would have been edifying to his friends if there was not involved the prospect of his leaving them. Now that the advantages of hospital care in his case were urged upon him, he in turn became uneasy. "Let me die at home," he said pleadingly to the doctor, each time the matter of his removal was alluded to.

Meanwhile the parishioners were beseeching heaven to restore their pastor. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart the little children, about to make their First Communion, offered their united prayers to God for the recovery of "Father Pat." They sorely missed him, for he had always prepared them on similar occasions in the past.

On the evening of that same day there was an unexpected change in the patient. He had been told of the children's devotion, and how they had waited at his door to know whether he was better. Whatever influence this attitude

of the lambs of his flock had upon the heart of the shepherd, it became quickly known that "Father Pat" was going to get better and that he had consented to the doctor's directions to go to the Cork Hospital, where he was to have careful nursing, in order to obtain complete restoration to health. Those who knew him best surmised that he had resolved on the change to soothe the grief of the little children, who did not want to see him die. Accordingly, on June 22, he was removed to the South Infirmary, Cork.

For a time he seems to have suffered great pain under the new treatment. After about three weeks he gained in strength, and the agony gradually lessened. He was able to read and to do some letter writing. The following, to one of his intimate friends at home, shows his condition at the time.

SOUTH INFIRMARY, CORK, 6 *July*, 1912.

I have been allowed up for a few hours yesterday and to-day, and I take the opportunity of sending you the first bulletin of my progress toward recovery. I say "progress" because I am very far from being out of the wood yet. I am astonishingly weak in physical strength, and very much emaciated, but I suppose that will disappear. Not to speak of one or two daily experiences of what is meant by physical pain I am having a life of luxurious idleness, for I cannot describe the attention and care of everyone here, from the matron down to the nurses, who do not know what to do for me. Their skill, their promptness, and their solicitude are marvellous. The doctors are equally kind. Dr. Cremen has been watching me anxiously, and Dr. Atkins is the kindest old gentleman in the world, except when he hurts, when I draw in my breath and say: Suf. I have never said "damn" even once.

A good many people call, but I cannot see them because my head aches from talking. Denis (Canon Sheehan's brother) comes up every day for a couple of hours. I don't feel the time at all lonely, except on a few occasions when I was in much agony. I lie down all day long, reading a little, praying a little — too little — and watching the wind tossing a big lime tree outside my window. But I look forward with a kind of terror to the future, beginning a weary life again and regretting, if it had been God's holy will, that I did not pass away.

No man was ever so eager to live as I was, and am, to die. I think the wish is increased by the amount of human suffering I hear of here. The whole world seems to be diseased. But we must struggle on until the night falls. I suppose I shall survive this attack, so direct all your prayers to one object — that I may not be a confirmed invalid for life and a burden to others. This is what I dread most. I hope you are all well, and that you will have a fine vacation and many sunny days in "Glenanaar." [1]

P. A. S.

Again he writes in October:

You get so many accounts both personally and by post of myself that I have very little to tell. I am much the same as I have been for some weeks. I cannot see any hopes of ultimate recovery, but I keep on doing what I am told. The drives you suggest are impossible, partly owing to weather, and partly to the nature of my maladies which are numerous and complicated. I cannot realize that I am an incurable patient in a public hospital. Everything has been made so easy for me, and above all I have got the supreme grace from our Lord to accept it all as something that should have happened, and without one shade of loneliness, or depression, even when I see the doctors in their toggery and the trolleys carrying in poor patients to the operation room. I seem to have been born to it. I suppose the doctors will patch up in some way this old wrecked body of mine and send me adrift in the world again, but it will be some time I think before I can stand at the altar. The nurses are not tired of me yet but continue their assiduous attention. Sometimes I have a great longing for home, especially on Sunday evenings, but then I argue that I cannot under any circumstances have the care and attention at home that I have here. Hence there is nothing for me but to wait. Some day our Lord will open up a way for me and solve all doubtings. But it does sting me to be told: "You are looking so well, you ought to be at home." Conscience strikes in here with its blows. I can only fall back on the fact that I am a confirmed invalid, and that no matter how long or short I live, there is no prospect of ultimate recovery. Keep on praying for me and do not let the little children forget me. I suppose Jeff has sent you the experiments he has been making with me on the camera.

[1] "Glenanaar" was the name given to a little retreat in the convent garden, where the Canon had built a rustic bench for the nuns.

They are ugly and good. If he has not sent them I shall send you the two he gave me.

P. A. S.

Among the few letters he wrote at this time in his beautiful even handwriting are several to Mr. Justice Holmes, with whom he kept up to the very end a correspondence that is as illuminating as it is characteristic.

SOUTH INFIRMARY, CORK,
October 6th, 1912.

DEAR JUDGE HOLMES,

My brother forwarded your last kind letter of inquiry to me; and, altho' not convalescent (for that would imply recovery, and recovery with me is out of the question), I am able to satisfy one desire, that of letting you know how grateful I am for all your solicitous inquiring. Two years ago a Dublin surgeon diagnosed some internal trouble, and left no hope of cure; but I went on working, until a sudden collapse came in June, which brought me to the gates of death. To my intense disgust and regret, the doctors pulled me back from the "eternal rest" to face the world as a chronic invalid. I have hope of leaving here, and perhaps of resuming some parochial work; but life for me is henceforth to be carried on on a broken wing. Fortunately, I have no pain; and no depression of spirits whatsoever. But I wish I had been at rest.

The words "regret and disgust" may surprise you; but I am pretty well tired of this curious drama of earthly life, and would be glad of a change of scene. All my dark views of this poor diseased humanity of ours have been more or less deepened by the scenes I witness here; for altho' I am cut away from the main body of patients, I cannot help coming across sometimes some poor fellow being rolled in on a trolley to the operation theatre; and I cannot help hearing the nurses talking of gruesome things which they have to witness amongst a hundred patients. The bright spot in all this mystery of human suffering is the faith and patience of the afflicted; and the almost superlative kindness of the nurses and some of the doctors. I think women are nearer to heaven than we are. At least, their love and kindness under the most revolting conditions seems a foreshadowing of that Providence that counts the sparrow on the housetops and numbers the hair on our heads. And just as war, hideous as it is, develops all

the latent good in our race, so suffering (and it seems universal) seems to call forth all that is divine within us. Someone has said that the invention of the lucifer-match was the greatest achievement of the 19th century. I am of opinion that the match must yield its place of precedence to the establishment of trained and skilled nurses.

I hope you keep well. I am sure you are working hard as ever. Your remarks in your letter of July 5th as to the attitude of the working man towards the capitalist, viewing life spectacularly, and not rationally, have often occurred to me. The vast body of the people have yet to learn what are the real constituents of human happiness; and alas! the whole tendency of modern thought and action is to intensify that universal and ruinous theory that all things have to be measured by their money value, and there is no other. If ever the masses come to understand that money is the meanest and most powerless factor in creating human happiness; and that all the great and good things of life are unpurchaseable, things might swing round to an equilibrium. But the brownstone mansion seems such a contrast to the tenement house that reason has no place there.

I shall probably be retained here for some time longer. It would be a great pleasure to hear from you, if your time permits. Meanwhile keep me in your memory. Your friendship is one of the sheet-anchors of life.

Ever affectionately,
dear Dr. Holmes,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

Later he writes:

SOUTH INFIRMARY, CORK,
Oct. 16, 1912.

DEAR DR. HOLMES,

I wrote you a few days ago; and the infliction of this second letter is due partly to the superabundant leisure I have at present; but principally to my desire to tell you how pleased I am at the compliments that have lately been paid you. Dear old St. Paul tells us: "Rejoice with them that rejoice;" and to me, it is far the greater pleasure to be able to congratulate my friends than to receive congratulations for myself. That compliment of the President is worth noting; but, of the many others, I sh'd prefer the reception you had at the College, when your degree was conferred. There is a spontaneity in the enthusiasm of the young

that makes it very valuable; and you have now not only academic honors; but this unique distinction that you are the only septuagenarian that ever lived who would say that the young lads of the present day are quite equal, if not superior to, our own contemporaries. For myself, I am always the *laudator temporis acti;* I think the world, at least this little section, that makes so much noise in the world, is much degenerated. I hope no whispers of envy will follow these acclamations; for there is a truth in the old saying: *Laudatur, et alget.* There is only one matter which to me is unforgivable in your fine career — that you have not written some great book on history or political economy. I have always thought you could do as well as Bryce or Lecky; and I should like future generations to know you, even as you are known to your contemporaries. I think mysticism is not in your line. I remember you had no sympathy with Emerson; and not much with Carlyle. But you could direct this very practical and erratic generation on your own lines. And, considering the stirring days of your youth, your "Memoirs" would be very valuable to the future.

I am pulling along like a bird with a broken wing; when Death looks in through one window, the doctors order him off, altho' I should like to open the door to him; and then he hovers around trying to get them off their guard. Some day he will succeed.

I have just had a letter from Lady Castletown. Lord C. is much better. They leave for London at the end of the month.

Always affectionately and sincerely,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

During his illness in the Infirmary he read the *Letters of G. Meredith*, which had been sent him by a friend. He gives his impressions of the book, and compares it to James Anthony Froude's *Reminiscences of Carlyle*, especially in its strongly biased views. He thinks that Meredith's self-revelations are likely to injure rather than enhance the reputation of their author.

Commenting upon a speech on "Home Rule Concessions for Ireland," made on the previous day by William O'Brien, he gives it as his opinion "that we are making a very bad bargain with England; and that the English will have a tighter hold of us than ever. But before these things come

to pass, I dare say I shall be beyond the reach of any interest in them." [1]

How true were these prognostications regarding both himself and his mother country has been demonstrated. He seemed to have foreseen the Easter uprising of 1916 and its apparent failure. Its forerunner of 1867 is graphically described by him in *The Graves at Kilmorna*, where he prophetically, as it were, enacted the death of "the good and brave Connolly, with the steadfast Clarke, with Shaun MacDermott — kindly Irish of the Irish — and with the upright Eamonn Ceannett," who (with Padraic H. Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Mary Plunkett) "have become part of the memory of Ireland."

For five months Canon Sheehan remained at the Infirmary. During that time he greatly endeared himself to the physicians, nurses, and patients who came in contact with him. The chaplain at the hospital was in the habit of saying to inquiring friends when the Canon had left: "He was the brightest and happiest patient I ever attended."

As soon as he could leave his bed he was seized with a consuming longing for his home in Doneraile. The surgeons were of opinion that his removal in his weak condition was fraught with danger, since in case of a relapse he would greatly miss the professional help afforded him at the hospital. Eventually his desire prevailed, and on November 25 he returned home, accompanied by his brother and a trained nurse.

He had sent word to his friends that he would soon be again with them; but he wanted no demonstration. "Oh, the joy that the news of his return brought to his devoted flock," writes a religious of the Convent at Doneraile. Many thought that the children's prayers had been answered and that he was entirely cured. He himself knew that it was not for long; still he would be "home." He stole in quietly by a late train, weary and tired after the journey, threw himself on his armchair, looked at his housekeeper and said: "I am home at last, thank God, and nothing

[1] Letter, Nov. 5, 1912, to Mrs. Sophie O'Brien.

shall ever make me leave it again, until I am in the coffin." He made minute inquiries about the children and everything that had happened in his absence. At an early hour next day he visited the convent, and insisted on seeing every child in the school before resting.

Strangely enough, his indomitable energy enabled him again to take up his duties. Once more he was with his flock at Christmas; then, through the spring months he was there, at the altar, though he was less active outside the church. Again, as of old, he stirred the hearts of the people in the month of May to love and imitation of the Blessed Mother of Christ. "God only knows what effort it cost him. Many a time his parched tongue almost prevented him from proceeding with the Mass, it was so painful for him to swallow." It was customary in his mission to communicate the people after Mass, and even for this service he gently declined the help of his curates, who were most anxious to give him all the assistance possible on these occasions. He would scarcely consent to take a cup of tea which his devoted chapel-woman had ready for him, lest it should cause any delay or inconvenience. The sole easement he allowed his enfeebled body was to sit in the sacristy armchair while the sacristan removed his vestments; for toward the end he was unable to do this for himself. On a few occasions he swooned off in the sacristy chair after preaching in the church. A distressing empty retching afflicted him almost constantly during the last few months. On week-day mornings he said Mass in his own oratory.

Again, to his friend in America, he writes regarding the condition of his health:

DONERAILE, CO. CORK,
December 2, 1912.

DEAR DR. HOLMES,

Just this moment, sitting at "my ain fireside," your letter was put into my hands. I have two or more correspondents whose handwriting on the envelope gives me cold chills all over; and a few, which I open with anticipation of pleasure. Amongst these latter, yours hold first place; and I always open your letter with the exclamation: "Not forgotten!"

I made a dash for liberty last Monday week. One of the doctors was holding out against me to the last; but he was finally persuaded that hospital life was not good from my standpoint; and so I packed up, and got back once more amongst my books and papers, and the kind faces of friends. All here have been exceedingly kind without distinction of class or creed; and altho' I begged and prayed that there should be no demonstration, I am afraid I shall have to face the band and illuminations tomorrow night. Poor people! they insisted on it; and it would be churlish to refuse any little testimony of their affection.

I do not know what you will think of "Miriam Lucas." It carries out my pet theory that there is an equilibrium in human life — some compensation balance that, in the end, makes the poor somewhat nearer to real happiness than the rich. I have seen both sides of the big question; and so far as mere happiness is concerned, I think on the whole the poor have the best of it, at least in this Ireland of ours. I am never tired of quoting a story told by A. K. H. B. (The Country Parson) in one of his books — the Grampian shepherd, coming home after a day's honest work, and declaring, after he had changed his boots, and swallowed a wholesome supper, and taken up *Chambers' Journal:*

"I do not envy the Duke of Buccleuch;" and, as a contrast, the monomaniac in his ducal mansion above the Thames, shouting impatiently:

"Oh, that river, that river, always rolling and rolling, and never rolling away!"

I see that the *N. York Herald* and another American paper hint that in the 3d book of "M. Lucas" I write "in complete ignorance of the conditions of life in N. York." I should like to know where the picture fails. It is not flattering, but I wrote after making careful inquiries amongst friends who have visited here from time to time. But I perceive that nations have nerves as well as individuals; and altho' I thought we Irish had a double dose of them, I perceive that the malady is universal. . . .

If too early to wish you a happy Xtmas, it is never premature to wish you every blessing, temporal and spiritual.

Always affectionately,
P. A. SHEEHAN.

To Lady Gilbert he writes a few months before his death:

DONERAILE *April* 3, 1913.

I have to thank you very much for your most kind letter of March 31st.

I am much better in health since I came home and found myself able to take part in the ordinary work of the parish. It is a wholesome distraction and acts as a kind of tonic, keeping the mind from dwelling too much on physical disabilities. But I shall always be an invalid, just struggling along, and consoling myself with the reflection that it is God's holy will, and the cross might have been much heavier than it is.

I am quite sure you have no need to envy me, or any Catholic writer of note in our generation, for I know no author who has given to the reading public such a splendid output of genuine literature as yourself.

He quotes "our good Father Russell" as commenting on the strange inconsistency of editors of Catholic magazines, who on the one hand complain of the lack of superior Catholic literature, and then refuse to do it justice, by generous acknowledgment, when it appears. He consoles himself with an ultimate adjustment of things under the providence of God, and says:

One who has the vocation of the pen must keep right on, never minding, and only striving to get in a great life's work before the night falls.

I am not now writing. I am too weak to attempt anything new. But I have a novel completed for the press; though I think it advisable to defer its publication until the autumn of the year. But I scribble away a little now and again, just for amusement and to while away a lonely hour. This habit of writing is a wonderful anodyne. Apart from the question of success or failure, it is itself a reward for the little labour involved.

During all this time, mindful of the fact that he was still pastor of his people, he did not permit himself to neglect the ordinary duties of his office. "I shall keep at my work as long as I am able to do something," he would say. He heard confessions and said the parochial Mass until shortly before his death. Toward the end of the summer he began to

say Mass in private, though he kept up until the 15th of August the habit of hearing confessions. That day he said his last Mass, after which he collapsed completely. The grief of the people, when they missed him from the altar, was extreme, for he had been in the habit of addressing a few words to them always. Some gossipers, who could not have known the Canon, had circulated the rumor that he was losing his mind.

When the fast-declining priest heard of it, he humorously discussed the report. The empty fabrication only amused him, though it distressed his friends. As a matter of fact, he retained his alert sense of things and all his faculties to the very last, and those who daily attended him, his curates, his physician, and others, not only refute this rumor, but they dwell on his clearness of mind and his thoughtfulness down to the close of his life. His keen interest in the welfare of his parishioners caused him to inquire and make provisions for them long after he had ceased to visit their houses or minister to them in the church.

At the beginning of the year he had taken occasion to thank them for their kindness to him all through the past years. He told them how the Bishop had asked him, some time before, to accept another responsible charge, and that he felt for a time that it would be his duty to do so. But when he thought of the little children, of the welcome he always received from his poor at the mission stations, of his visits to the homes of his people in the country, his choir and his Sunday catechism, aye, every stone of the little church and of the town of Doneraile, he could not bring himself to leave them. He pointed to the spot close by the church door where he wished to be buried among them, hoping that the little children and the poor would pray at the grave as they would pass by on their way to the Church. He then asked them to make allowance for any want on his part in his parochial work. "It is not want of will but want of strength that makes me fail in doing what I would for you, my dearest people." There was a wave of sobs among the congregation, the young and the old, and he

himself broke down. That was on New Year's Day, when he was already ailing much.

Among the friends who were to cheer him in his last illness was Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who writes:

"During the last summer of his life I was at Doneraile and called every day after luncheon, that time being best for him. He knew, and I feared, he was dying, though I did not admit it. One day he bid me go to his library and select a book. On his assurance I took *Suarez — De Legibus*, which I had heard him praise, and it bears his inscription "August 5th 1913" . . . I wish that I could have offered him something besides affection and reverence for his lovely spirit."

The end was coming fast.

II

THE END

WITH the autumn came the final crisis. By gentle manliness he had managed to keep to himself the secret of much of his suffering, because he would not distress the children who had sought to pray him back to health; but God's wisdom had ordained otherwise. Now that he was to bid them a last farewell, all he wanted was their prayers for a happy death. "Autumn had come and almost gone, the leaves had fallen from the trees, the birds were seeking shelter beneath the laurels," so he too would seek shelter beneath mother earth and within the shade of his little church, to await the awakening of a new spring in Paradise.

He brought to bear the same strong zeal and earnestness that had characterized all his previous doings upon the last important act of his earthly life — he meant to die well. After he had seen his people for the last time in the church he took to his bed. Thenceforth his days were spent in almost unbroken silence and prayer. He had no apparent dread of death; and when it definitely knocked to summon him, he met it with a quiet alacrity that betokened the realization of a true home going.

I followed a morning star
And it led to the gate of light.
With a cry of "Hail and rejoice!"
And farewell to the things that are,
And hail to eternal peace,
And rejoice that the day is done,
For the night brings but release
And threatens no waking sun.

A few intimate friends were allowed at intervals to see him, and their memories, to the very last, are those of a

HEADSTONE MARKING THE GRAVE OF CANON SHEEHAN AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE PARISH CHURCH, DONERAILE

tranquil joy, with which, in full possession of all his faculties, he recognized their affectionate regard, grateful for each least kindness.

The priests who had labored with him for years assisted him in every way possible to ease his departure. He received the last Sacraments with that humble and devout expression of his faith in the Real Presence which had been his strength and the center of his priestly ministry for well nigh forty years. With his rosary in his hands, he calmly expired about six o'clock on the evening of October fifth, 1913, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. The people had gathered throughout the day in the church to recite the prayers for the dying. The children in scattered groups, kneeling before the altar and about the shrine of Our Lady, had been pouring forth their invocations: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us now and — at the hour of our death," when the bells from the church tower tolled their "Amen" to indicate that the beloved pastor of Doneraile had gone to his eternal rest.

AFTERMATH

The life of the simple reserved pastor of the modest village of Doneraile as here told, mostly in his own language, conveys to the thoughtful reader various lessons of a conscientious search after high ideals, of docility to noble impulse, and of unbroken industry. What he wrought, often in exquisite workmanship, through his pen, is sure to reach a large audience for generations to come.

But if Canon Sheehan was a writer, a poet, and a patriot, whose eloquence in his books or on the platform captivated those who read or heard his words, he was first and foremost the pastor of his flock, intent on directing their thoughts and efforts toward eternal issues. These issues he had sought to realize clearly for himself; and when that was done he had no other aim but to lead the way for others. The joy of intellect, the subtle pleasure that comes with the response of a wide fame among the good, from the utterance of truth, and through the charm and attraction of

letters, was his for a brief span of years. Then came the many things, as they always come in the life of a priest who labors successfully, that reminded him of the futility of human applause:

Vox popularis
Sonitus maris.

From that time forward he listened for another voice, clearer if not louder, more sweetly insistent when once the soul has caught its delightful melody, and more sustained with latent promise; a sacred voice whose appeal lifts the heart, and differs from the call of human love, as the organ notes on solemn festivals differ from the whisperings of the wind through the brush of the woodland. He had caught the vision of the form of the fair Christ whom Catholic theology had outlined and interpreted for him in his reflections and meditations at the foot of the altar. He had vowed to follow this Master, with childlike readiness and absolute trust; and the fascination of the path, the *Via Crucis*, absorbed him more and more as he grew older and came nearer to the gate of death.

Someone has said:

The Door of Death is made of gold
That mortal eyes cannot behold.
But when the chastened eyes are closed,
And cold and pale the limbs reposed,
The soul awakes; and wond'ring sees
In her own hand the golden keys.

Canon Sheehan spent his life in fashioning the golden keys that would open to him the gate of death. How he did it is probably the most important lesson to be learned from his career. If as a priest he had spent his life in the task of forming others upon the Christian model, he became first of all through self-discipline the "forma facta gregis," the pattern for the flock. He had striven to be humble; and for that reason he was able to achieve what men of perhaps greater talent leave unaccomplished. "No real work is done in the world," he writes, "except by humble and

lowly men." In that sentence we have from Canon Sheehan himself an unconscious statement of the principles that guided him and the secret of the success which he undoubtedly attained. Ere he had reached middle life he had become conscious of what he sympathetically puts into the mouth of the old priest in *My New Curate*.

> Alas! how weak and pitiful I am, how this unsubdued nature of mine craves for things beyond Thee! I know there is no truth but in Thee — no sincerity, no constancy. . . . Yet this lower being within my being forever stretches out its longings to sensible things that deceive, and will not rest in Thee, who art all Truth. But I must be brought back to Thee through the sharp pangs of trials and tears. Spare me not, O Master! only do not punish me with the deprivation of Thy Love.

And when he felt that his day on earth was done he prayed with the old priest, Dr. Gray:

> Take my frail life, frail as the moth that wings
> Its rapid life in one melodious breath,
> And fashion it anew with all those things
> Cast in the brazen crucible of death.
>
> Lo, as my pulses flag, my senses die,
> I feel Thee coming near and ever near.
> I hear Thee in my last unuttered sigh.
> My spirit lingers; but my God is here.

Hence it was in the spirit of an apostle who answers the call of his Master that he went to his grave. That is the thought he embodied in the simple inscription which he had written for his headstone — a plain Celtic cross:

CANON SHEEHAN, P.P. D.D.
BORN MARCH 17, 1852
DIED ON ROSARY SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1913
R. I. P.
"WHERE DWELLEST THOU, RABBI?"
AND JESUS SAID
"COME AND SEE."

"I came to Doneraile," writes John J. Horgan, author of *Great Catholic Laymen*, "on the day of his funeral. All the countryside had come to do him homage. A nation mourned by his grave. Lords and Members of Parliament, farmers and laborers, professional men and artisans, all were as one in their sorrow and in their loss. But it was in the little house by the river that one missed him most. The gentle presence, the quiet voice, the kindly smile, all gone . . . The procession passed through the little village street, through the convent grounds where he so often went to encourage and help the good nuns in their work; and finally they laid him to rest beside his church."

His spirit lingers in the village, and the visitor as he approaches the gate of the church may see, almost at any hour of the day, the kneeling figures of little children and of women and men, who bend their heads in prayer over the stone that covers the remains of their beloved pastor of old. The praise of his memory is everywhere, and is perpetuated for those who worship within, by the memorial windows in the church, and for the stranger outside by the marble figure on the green fronting the street. It is a testimony of affectionate reverence not only from those to whom the love of their pastor appeals in death, but from the entire population, and from admirers across the Atlantic and the Pacific, among whom he was held in the highest esteem for his intellectual gifts and his big-hearted charity, for his public-spirited forethought in behalf of his fellows, and the humble gentlemanly dignity that shone forth from his conduct.

The common tribute to Canon Sheehan's worth has been summed up by his friend William O'Brien, who writes in his epitaph: "one of the truest men of genius who have illustrated the Irish name, and one of the truest saints who ever sanctified the Irish soil."

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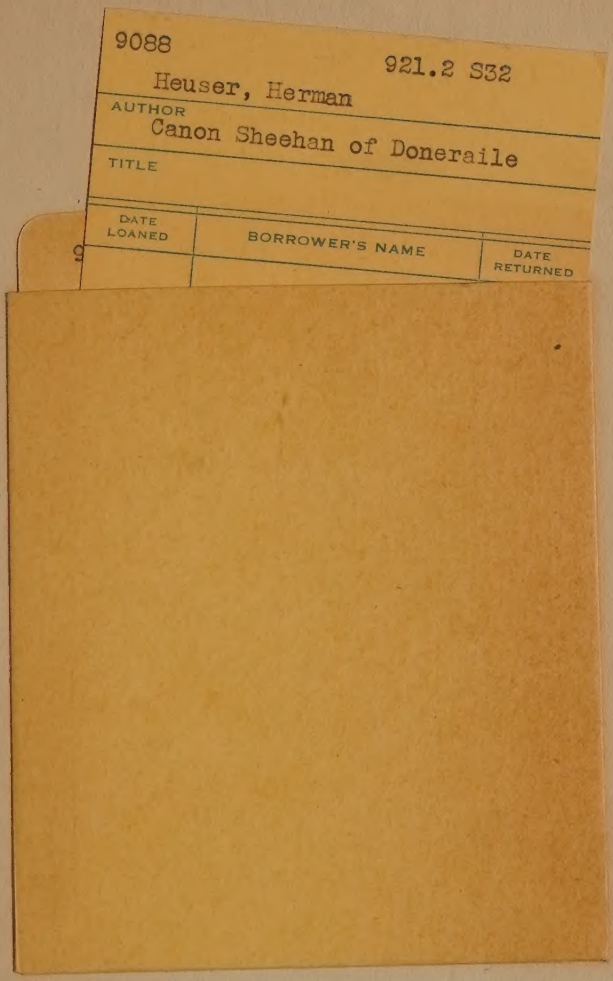
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